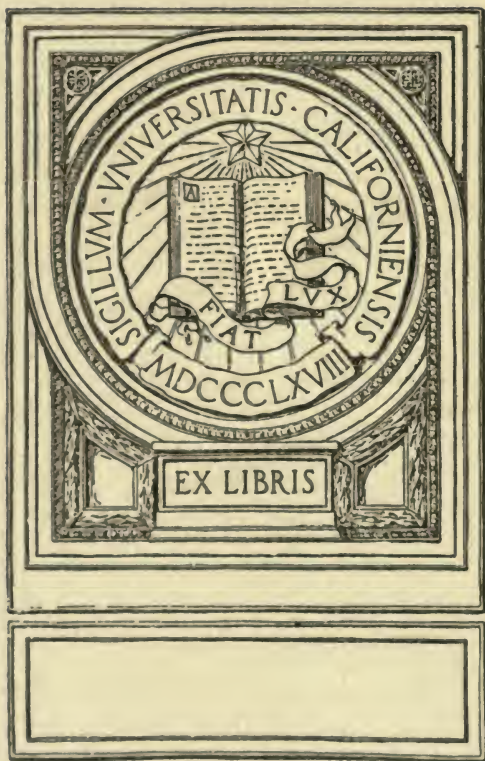


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MAIL-ORDER
MADE EASY
by
Max Rittenberg



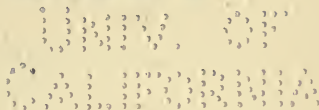




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MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY



BY

MAX RITTENBERG, A.I.P.A.

Preface by Herbert N. Casson

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TO XIMU
AIRBORNE

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PREFACE

FOR years there has been a steady demand for a well-written authoritative book on mail-order, published at a low price.

There are five or six good books on this important subject, but they are expensive. This book is, I believe, the first one to be published at the low price of five shillings.

In selecting the author of this book, I had three qualifications in mind :—

1.—He must be a man of the highest standing in the industry of mail-order.

2.—He must have been connected with some of the largest mail-order firms, so that he will write from practical experience and not as a theorist.

3.—He must be able to write in an interesting and effective way. He must not be

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dull, as so many business men are when they become authors.

As you can see, the author of this book—Mr. Max Rittenberg—has all these qualifications.

He is an Associate of the Institute of Incorporated Practitioners in Advertising, a Member of Council of the Advertising Association, and Vice-Chairman of the British Direct Mail Advertising Association.

He was formerly Director in charge of Advertising with Martin's Ltd., of Piccadilly, which has, by mail-order alone, secured 160,000 customers. This is the most notable success that has ever been achieved by any British company. He now handles the public advertising of Rothman's Ltd. (Cigarettes by Mail-Order), and of other successful mail-order firms.

Also, as you can see by glancing through these pages, he knows how to write in a clear, vivid and interesting way. This book is a pleasure to read, as well as a gold-mine of practical information.

Here you will find the whole art of selling goods by mail, all set forth in a single book.

PREFACE

It is, in fact, a £10 10s. Course of Study, offered to business men for a couple of half-crowns.

It is an indispensable book for all business men who want to sell more goods at a lower cost—who want to reach out for a national trade, without the expense of commercial travellers.

No book on this subject, at any price, has more practical information than you will find here. The tenth chapter alone is worth the price of the book.

HERBERT N. CASSON.

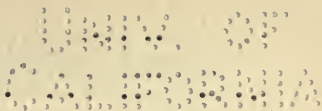
THE DELL,
CHURCH ROAD,
UPPER NORWOOD,
LONDON, S.E.19.

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MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

CHAPTER I

WHAT EXACTLY IS MAIL-ORDER?

WHAT ARE ITS LINES OF ATTACK?

MAIL-ORDER is a method of selling. It is not to be regarded as a method of advertising.

Mail-order is selling direct to the consumer without the intervention of salesmen. In place of salesmen, the printed message is used.

Now, this printed message can either be delivered through the press or through the post—and an experienced mail-order firm concentrates on whichever of these media it finds the more profitable. It may use both channels; it draws no distinction between advertising through press or post; and either is judged on the results in DIRECT ORDERS OR ENQUIRIES.

I have emphasised the above because quite a number of people think of mail-order as

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synonymous with small advertisements in the "Postal Bargains Pages" of well-known newspapers; or else in terms of very large spaces such as those used by sellers of encyclopedias, correspondence courses, home tool outfits, and so forth.

Just what is the right size for a mail-order advertisement will be discussed in a later chapter. And whether press or post is likely to be the more profitable for any kind of proposition, will also be threshed out in detail.

THE BASIS OF PROFITABLE MAIL-ORDER

Mail-order only justifies itself, in terms of tangible profit to the seller, when it offers the consumer goods which he cannot conveniently buy in a shop, or else goods he can obtain in a shop, but can buy through mail-order **AT A LOWER PRICE.**

When attempts are made to sell by mail-order goods which can be purchased widely in the shops, and at the same price, the result is failure.

It is only when you are really giving the public an exceptional service—offering them

WHAT EXACTLY IS MAIL-ORDER ?

goods which they cannot get in the ordinary way, or offering at a lower price than they would otherwise have to pay—that you receive a response from them which makes selling by mail-order profitable.

Don't attempt a mail-order business unless your goods and prices conform to one or other of the above two conditions.

It may be objected that large departmental stores are offering, by public advertisement, the same goods as they sell across the counter and at the same price. That is true. But the stores call it "post-order," not "mail-order." And they know very well that "post-order" is more a convenience to the customer living out of town than it is a source of real profit to them. They would much prefer to have a customer call in at the store. But if she cannot possibly do that, then post-order helps to overcome the obstacle of distance.

ANOTHER VITAL POINT IN MAIL-ORDER BUSINESS

A mail-order business can either be founded on selling a novelty or speciality ; or on selling staple lines.

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The former means that the manufacturer has a monopoly of a particular kind of article, and can fix his own price, which is not exactly comparable in the consumer's mind with shop prices for other articles. He is, therefore, able to add on a considerable margin of profit; in some cases quite a heavy margin.

When the goods are only sold ONCE to a given consumer—e.g., as with an encyclopedia—it is essential to have a wide margin of profit for successful mail-order selling.

Quite the contrary is the case when the goods offered are "staple," in the sense that they can be easily bought from shops all over the country. Then, the mail-order price must be below the customary shop price, and the margin of profit is thereby narrowed down considerably.

So, what happens in actual practice is that a firm selling staple goods by mail-order is likely to make a loss on the first order, and has to recoup itself out of succeeding orders from the same customer.

From this it follows that such a firm is
DEPENDENT FOR ITS PROFITS ON SATISFYING

WHAT EXACTLY IS MAIL-ORDER?


THE CUSTOMER COMPLETELY, AND MAKING HIM OR HER INTO A "REGULAR."

Securing a new customer is liable to be costly, whether its method of advertising be press or post. But when a customer has ordered once, inducing him to order again is NOT an expensive affair. It boils down to an efficient follow-up system, and the trade it gets out of that "regular" customer shows a good profit even though the price of the articles are well below the customary shop price.

The above is a point of the most vital importance, which is not widely realised by those unfamiliar with mail-order. They are likely to expect—as I know very well by actual personal contact with scores of intending mail-order sellers—that the first sale made by advertising will show them a profit.

It may be actually twelve months or more before the profit on the repeat orders converts the initial loss into a real net profit. This has to be allowed for, both in the planning and in the financing of the mail-order business, or else there will be a big disappointment ahead.

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 Reverting to the other side of mail-order—the selling of a novelty or speciality for which the manufacturer has a practical monopoly, it is quite possible to get a real net profit on the first order, and so to be independent of whether the customer “comes again” for any other goods.

CREATING CONFIDENCE IN THE BUYER.

Realise the situation of a man in a little country village who is asked by advertisement to buy goods from a firm he has never heard of before—with premises in London, Manchester, or other large city—and is asked to send his money in advance to that firm of strangers.

They may be crooks. How is he to know? They may send him unsatisfactory goods after they had banked his money. How is he to protect himself?

The leading dailies and some of the leading weeklies guarantee to their readers that advertisements in their papers are reputable, and that they will make good on any default on the part of the advertiser. This is admirable. I wish it were a fixed rule with every

WHAT EXACTLY IS MAIL-ORDER?

paper published in this country. But as it is not yet universal, there is still liable to be suspicion in the mind of the potential purchaser.

The answer to all this is that a mail-order firm **MUST** offer a guarantee of "satisfaction or money back."

There are many ways of wording such guarantees, and several are shown in later chapters. The point I wish to emphasise is this—the wider and more generous the terms of the firm's guarantee, the less will the general public take unfair advantage of them.

In fact, mass honesty is fundamentally sound—and no one knows it better than the large mail-order houses, with years of experience of offering the most generous guarantees, and experience also of trusting strangers with goods before they have received the money.

The percentage of people who ask for money to be returned (or do not pay for goods sent on approval) is so small in the case of firms offering reputable merchandise, that it is much less than the average of annual bad debts made by the wholesaler or retailer.

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You need never hesitate to trust the British public to do the fair and honest thing ; and you need never hesitate to make your guarantee of satisfaction as widely protecting of THEIR interests as you possibly can.

THE FOLLOW-UP IN A MAIL-ORDER BUSINESS

One of the most important factors of success in a mail-order business which needs repeat orders to make it profitable, is the nature of the follow-up—HOW, and HOW OFTEN ?

It is a subject which really needs threshing out in detail with a mail-order expert, as to how it should be applied to any particular business ; but so far as I can lay down general principles in the matter, I have done so in Chapter VIII.

The time and thought and care—and understanding of human nature—which goes into a follow-up system as used by large and successful mail-order houses, would probably astonish most commercial firms. It is very far removed indeed from the usual run of form letters, price lists and catalogues, such

WHAT EXACTLY IS MAIL-ORDER?

as a wholesale house sends out to its retailer customers. It is almost an art in itself.

So, in planning a mail-order business which is to depend for its profit on repeat orders, one must be very sure that there is a man in the organisation who knows how to devise and manage a follow-up system—or else there must be a call on someone outside the organisation who really does know how this specialised art should be carried out.

It is by no means enough to insert pulling advertisements in newspapers. That is only the **FIRST STEP** in the process of selling successfully by mail-order.

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CHAPTER II

WHAT KINDS OF ARTICLES ARE SUITABLE FOR MAIL-ORDER?

AND HOW SHOULD THEY BE PRICED?

IT should be already clear that articles suited for mail-order must be either :—

1.—Novelties or specialities, priced to show a good margin of profit ; or

2.—Staples priced at lower than ordinary shop prices.

But beyond this, further questions open up before one can say with confidence : “ This is the right article to be sold by mail-order.”

Ask yourself—Is it possible to convey by words and illustration exactly what your article looks like and feels like? Don't balk at this question. Don't assume that anything can be adequately described and illustrated.

E.g., a golf club, a tennis racket, a sporting

ARTICLES FOR MAIL-ORDER

rifle, or a fishing rod can be shown by illustration and described in words as to all its dimensions—length, breadth, weight and so forth. Its “finish” can be adequately described, and the illustration will show what it LOOKS like.

But no amount of clever description will properly convey what it FEELS like. “Feel” or “Balance” is a vital point in purchasing. Watch a keen golfer or tennis player at a sports goods shop, selecting his fancy. He may handle a dozen or more, before he finds one which feels JUST RIGHT in his hands for his particular set of arm and wrist muscles.

If he is not really satisfied about the feel and balance of the club or racket he has bought, he will not play well with it—and he will have a continuous grievance against those who sold it to him.

So, the above kinds of goods do not sell easily by mail-order in this country, where keen sportsmen can usually visit a sports goods shop. It is possible, however, that they might be sold overseas to people in places where sports goods shops are not close at hand—but even then, such men would

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probably prefer to deal with a sports emporium in some big city in their own continent.

The same mail-order difficulty of adequate description can also arise with textile goods. If these are made with patterns in several colours, then the purchaser by mail-order wants to know the exact combination of colours ; and this involves one of two expedients :—

(1) Printed illustration in full colours, which are very expensive, both for colour-blocks and for printing.

(2) Sending actual samples, which are also liable to be expensive.

Again, a suite of furniture can be described and illustrated—several different suites can be shown in a catalogue or leaflet—and yet the great majority of home-builders would much prefer to go to a shop and examine the actual articles offered, not only for their appearance but also for their COMFORT when sitting or reclining.

So, these kind of articles also are difficult to sell by mail-order.

Following this line of thought to its logical

ARTICLES FOR MAIL-ORDER

conclusion, the kind of article which is really suited to mail-order is :—

(1) Something which **can be grasped at a glance**—through a black and white illustration.

(2) Something which **does not involve a difficult choice** between various models—because of the feel of the article, or because it needs to be actually “tried” on the person, or because it needs to be sat in.

(3) If it be a complicated piece of mechanism, as with a wireless set, then usually it must be assembled so completely that the purchaser does not have to adjust it in delicate ways. It must be **ready for immediate use** by a person ignorant of technical adjustments.

(4) An article capable of being sent through the parcel post, or by carrier, **without liability to damage en route**. The shaking it will receive in transit must not throw its mechanism out of gear. This means that the model must be carefully and strongly assembled, and packed so as to obviate any rough handling en route.

This point is very important. For instance a certain firm selling wireless cabinets by

MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

mail-order had shoals of complaints on a new model, because the shaking up in transit put it out of adjustment in a large proportion of cases.

In brief, for mail-order you want a simple article or one which looks simple.

FIXING THE SELLING PRICE

In the first place, let us assume it is a staple article—in the sense that something very similar to it can be obtained in shops all over the country. It might, for instance, be an article of personal wear such as a hand-knit woollie.

The prices of similar hand-knit woollies, as sold by West-End speciality shops, and as sold by good-class drapery houses in provincial towns, must be ascertained.

Thus, one arrives at a fair idea of the regular retail selling price, and one has to price one's own goods so as to show a saving of anywhere from 2s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. in the £. About 5s. in the £ is a good target to aim at. Twenty-five per cent. reduction is a nice round figure, easily appreciable by the prospective customer, and one which will strongly

ARTICLES FOR MAIL-ORDER

incline him to buy by mail-order and make a substantial saving.

Many people have attempted to sell such articles by mail-order at full shop prices ; but it is not a basis for a successful mail-order business. A prospective purchaser is very likely to " shop around " and make sure that the claims of price reduction by mail-order are real ; and if she does so and finds she can get what is apparently the same article in a shop at the same price, she obviously will buy at the shop, and she will not recommend the mail-order firm to her friends.

Recommendation is a very big factor in the success of a mail-order house. If claims of price-reduction through mail-order buying are real, they must be capable of practical proof by the purchaser who " shops around."

Now let us assume that the article is not a staple one but a speciality on which the manufacturer can fix his own price, because he is apparently without competition. This is true only up to a certain point, and no further. There is competition against him—the competition of quite different articles.

For instance, visualise it as a patent

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speciality fountain pen, different from anything else in the market and superior to it—without any real competition in fountain pens. But the person who is inclined to buy one for himself (or to give away as a Christmas present) will have the mental alternatives of several other luxuries for his own use (or his friend's use) which he might buy instead.

He might be mentally prepared to pay 30s. for this very superior pen with all its additional improvements. If the price be put up to £2 2s., his mind begins to waver between buying that pen and buying other luxuries costing not more than 30s.

This is particularly so in the case of Xmas presents. Lots of men and women make up a "shopping list" at Xmas time, with a list of their relatives and friends, and against each the approximate price they are prepared to pay for an attractive present.

Then, the usual thing is that they go round the big stores and speciality shops in December, looking out for a present AT ABOUT THAT PRICE, without being definitely decided in mind as to the exact article to be given.

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In this way, there is real competition between one luxury article and another—between one speciality and another.

In practical business, it means that somewhere there is a limit of price above which one dare not offer one's goods.

In order to arrive at a "practical" price, one can assume the following line of reasoning :—

An article sold at 30s. in the shops probably allows the retailer 33.1/3 per cent. off selling price. In other words, he buys it from the wholesaler at 20s. The wholesaler may be getting 20 per cent. off 20s. He buys from the manufacturer at 16s.

The manufacturer has also to pay salary and commission to his traveller who calls on the wholesaler. This may be about 5 per cent., so that the money he actually receives for the article is a little over 15s.

In the customary course of distribution through traveller, wholesaler, and retailer, the public pays nearly double the price received by the manufacturer. The margin is "selling and distribution costs."

With mail-order, the selling and distribution

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costs, are replaced by press advertising, printed literature, postage, etc., and the employment of staff who originate and send out the publicity, both press and postal. One should have a fair margin for all this by figuring a speciality monopoly sold by mail-order on the same basis as trade selling—i.e., a 15s. article can be priced to the public at about 30s. post free.

If one went as far as 35s. in the pricing, it might be within that natural law of competition mentioned above, and be a practical selling price as compared with shop articles which are also luxuries.

If priced higher than 35s., the natural law of competition might reduce its sales enormously.

The above applies to definite tangible ARTICLES. It does not apply to the selling of a course of instruction and personal service—as with a correspondence school, where it is very difficult for a prospective purchaser to assess the cash value of the instruction and the personal advice.

He is to receive a certain number of booklets of instruction weekly or fortnightly.

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The actual printing cost of such booklets is of course small—certainly less than £1.

But he is not paying merely for printed booklets, he is paying for the concentrated thought and experience which has gone into the writing of those booklets. He is also receiving personal attention in the correcting of his efforts. And, in many cases, correspondence schools even go so far as to obtain a post for him after he has completed his training—and the value of all this is not comparable with the price of a book sold by a bookseller.

So, the correspondence school can set a fee of 5-*gns.*, 10-*gns.*, or even 15-*gns.* for its course and services, and find men year after year who are willing to pay that price—and do in fact receive very good value for the money they have spent.

The price in this case is really governed by the fees charged by other correspondence schools of a similar nature, or by schools that offer courses of instruction by post in OTHER branches of endeavour. The price of the course is, therefore, determined by reference to this competition to a certain extent, and

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also to a great extent by experience, because such a school will now and again revise its charge, upwards or downwards, in order to FEEL ITS WAY TOWARDS A MAXIMUM VOLUME OF BUSINESS AT A REASONABLE PROFIT TO ITSELF.

The same considerations apply to a mail-order course of beauty and health treatments, and special remedial treatments. The price is not based on the actual cost of the articles sent to a subscriber; it is priced on considerations similar to those which determine the price of a correspondence college training.

MAIL-ORDER ADVERTISING

CHAPTER III

HOW DOES ONE START WITH MAIL-ORDER ADVERTISING?

IS PRESS OR POST THE MOST PROFITABLE
AS A MAIL-ORDER MEDIUM?

I MUST first state the main principle likely to govern the profitable use of press or post.

Use the post if you know the kinds of men and women who are your most likely prospects, and their names and addresses.

If you do not, then use the press.

The press sends your message BROADCAST to all sorts and conditions of men and women. The post confines it to SELECTED classes.

The press is cheapest when the message HAS to be broadcast. The post is cheapest when one can address to a selected class of men or women who are potential buyers and likely buyers.

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Either press or post can be cheapest for particular propositions. Don't be prejudiced against either. Both are advertising. Both can be successful advertising.

To reason this out from extreme cases: Suppose you had a special kind of gut to sell to Sports Goods Manufacturers and Sports Outfitters. There are 38 of the former listed in the London Buff Book Telephone Directory, and 50 of the latter.

The quickest and cheapest way of advertising to these London people would obviously be by circular letter. It would be infinitely cheaper than trying to get at them through the daily press, and cheaper than through the trade press.

But, on the other hand, if one has a special kind of safety razor to sell to men, then any man in the whole of the big London Telephone Directory could be considered as a potential buyer. As a telephone user, he is a man of some substance and has enough spare money to spend on your article. But it would be far too expensive to circularise every man in the London Telephone Directory. The cheaper way would be to go out to him broadcast through a press message, preferably

MAIL-ORDER ADVERTISING

in a London EVENING paper, because these papers circulate only in London and a restricted area around London.

Carrying the argument a step further, if one wanted to reach millions of men all over the country, the cheapest way would be through the national daily newspapers and weekly journals of large circulation. It would be altogether too costly to circularise each man individually. It would work out more costly than the press, even though one were to take batches of names here and there.

The above are extreme cases. There are many mail-order propositions which come half-way between the extremes, and therefore cannot be decided on general principles without resorting to an actual specific test.

Suppose it were hand-knit woollies as mentioned in the preceding chapter. One might reasonably imagine that the logical buyers for these would be people with good West-End addresses, or resident in a good class of country house. If making an actual test, one would probably find that orders secured in this way work out more expensive than those secured through advertising in daily and

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weekly journals which reach to the same people in a wholesale, broadcast manner.

On the other hand, I should mention that a well-known firm selling cigars by mail for many years past have found by experience that cigar smokers respond and buy more readily from folders dispatched to them through the post than from press advertisements; and the post has been, and still is, their main medium of advertising.

A correspondence college, *per contra*, cannot use the post successfully to reach its possible students, because it cannot possibly determine who, amongst the masses of young men and women in the British Isles, are imbued with a desire to learn art, accountancy, secretarial work, and so forth. One can only get at these special, exceptional people through broadcast messages flung far and wide through newspapers and periodicals of large circulation.

An advertising expert can frequently say, straight off, that either the press or the post will be the most profitable advertising medium for a particular mail-order proposition submitted to him. If he is experienced on this

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specialised branch of advertising, one can take his advice on the matter.

But it may very well happen that the mail-order proposition one submits is on the "doubtful" side—doubtful, that is, from the point of view of press or post, and he would then recommend the making of A TEST IN BOTH DIRECTIONS. The mail-order advertiser will be advised to take a few insertions in daily newspapers and weekly journals of large circulation. He should also make a test mailing of a couple of thousand to selected groups of prospects—say, for instance, country house people, good-class telephone residents in London, and good-class telephone residents in provincial cities—and then judge on the three figures of cost-per-enquiry, cost-per-order, and cost-per-average-order.

Provincial men and women generally respond to mail-order better than London names. And people in country districts, better than those in provincial cities.

I mentioned above that one needs just a few advertisements to test the market. This is a very deliberate statement. I mean that no more than two mail-order advertisements in a leading national newspaper, and two

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advertisements each in a couple of weeklies of large circulation, will absolutely determine the point in question.

The success of mail-order advertising does not depend primarily on taking a number of insertions in any one journal. One does not find in actual practice that the insertions go on pulling better and better with each insertion at frequent intervals. Quite on the contrary. If the intervals are too frequent, the results are likely to be diminishing instead of increasing. There are cases within my knowledge where the very first advertisement of all has pulled astonishingly good results, and in years of trading thereafter the firm has never been able to find a type of advertisement which has equalled in results the first spectacular splash.

Apart from such extreme cases, the general principle in mail-order is that, to get increasing results—or reasonable even results—one must carefully regulate the time interval allowed between advertisements.

This needs to be explained at some length.

Assume that a mail-order advertisement of a certain size, with copy varied a little with

MAIL-ORDER ADVERTISING

each insertion, but carrying the same general story, is running once a month in a popular weekly paper, with results satisfactory to the advertiser. The advertiser then knows that the medium is right and the general style and tone of message are right. Results will naturally vary between one issue and another, owing to differences in headline and copy, and also owing to various external conditions (such as weather, politics, news of exceptional interest, and other factors) which are outside his control, but, in general, results are profitable.

The advertiser may then think that since this particular field is proved to be fertile, he ought to take space more frequently—every three weeks or every fortnight. Trying it, he finds that this is wrong. Replies fall off. In other words, he is exhausting his public too quickly.

The same kind of experience is found by publishers of an encyclopedia. Some of these firms are very keen and shrewd mail-order advertisers, and from past experience, they know thoroughly well what they are doing when they book space and fill that space. They select proved media, book picked posi-

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tions, and use a style of copy and illustrations which has proved profitable on previous occasions.

Having all these factors in their favour, do they advertise regularly in newspapers once a week all the year round, expecting better and better results as the year goes on? They do not. Why not? A typical campaign runs for about six weeks, then stops; and is not renewed for possibly six months. What actually happens is that replies from repeat insertions diminish to an unprofitable extent; *and the firm has to allow sufficient time for a new crop of buyers to grow up.*

The "new crop" is not necessarily a new set of readers. It is rather a new crop of buying desire; or, possibly, a new crop of buying ability, i.e., surplus money to spend. Whatever precisely it may be, it is undoubtedly a fact well-known to any experienced mail-order man. It is just as much a fact as that a farmer cannot profitably milk his cows six times a day.

To vary the metaphor, the mail-order advertiser in his first advertisement in any good pulling journal is dipping into a jug of milk on which the cream has risen thickly to the

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surface. At his first dip he gets full cream ; but if he goes on dipping too long, he will come down to skim milk. *If he wants cream all the time*, he must wait until the next jug of milk has "settled" and is rich at the top.

That idea of "allowing a new crop to grow up" is an essential principle in mail-order advertising. The factor of "frequency of insertion" is vital to a mail-order business. The longest period between insertions will, however, vary with different businesses and with different media. It may be once a week in some cases ; it may be once a month ; it may be as long as once in three months.

No one with real experience in mail-order would dogmatise as to precisely the best "frequency" for an untried proposition. But he will have previous experiences in mind ; he will be able to infer a reasonable frequency from previous data ; and he will keep himself open-minded as to variations which will tune in better with the natural wave-length of the proposition he is handling.

If frequency of insertion be properly adjusted, then results can be—and in many cases undoubtedly are—cumulative. But if that vital point be not properly watched and

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determined, then results will be diminishing instead of cumulative.

This is the reason why one sees successful mail-order advertisers jumping about from one paper to another, and leaving considerable gaps between insertions even in media which are well-known to the advertising industry as "good pullers."

A mail-order business usually grows by extending its list of proved media—and so reaching to different groups of readers—rather than by trying to squeeze extra business out of any one medium. The simplest way to get more milk is to increase one's herd of cows.

SUMMING UP

Just a few insertions in big dailies and weeklies will test the market for the possibilities of mail-order press advertising.

A couple of thousand circulars, divided into three or four groups and sent to different classes of prospects, will test the possibilities of the post.

When one has received one's enquiries, answered them, followed them up, and given

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a thorough "squeeze" to each enquirer—then one figures up the average cost-per-enquiry from the two media of press and post, the cost-per-order, and the average value-of-order—and comparing one's sets of figures, one has the guidance for pursuing the campaign on a fairly large scale.

COMBINED USAGE OF PRESS AND POST

Some firms can sell their goods DIRECT from a press advertisement. Other firms find that they must use the press to obtain their enquiries—and then convert the enquirers into purchasers through a postal follow-up.

This latter is quite a frequent procedure in mail-order. Such an advertiser uses small spaces in popular journals to sift out for him from the vast mass of the general population, the few people interested in his particular offering. They are asked to fill in a coupon of enquiry, or send a postcard, for some explanatory booklet. In response to the enquiry, the booklet asked for is sent at once ; and then the enquirer is followed up energetically with other kinds of literature at close intervals of time.

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The whole subject of follow-ups, on which many mail-order businesses depend for their profit, will be dealt with in a later chapter.

As to cost of a press message, about 1*d.* per 1,000 net sales per inch single col. is a rate offered by many papers of big circulation, and 2*d.* should be the outside, while the cost of a postal message may be anywhere from £5 to £10 per 1,000.

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CHAPTER IV

WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF MAIL-ORDER COPY?

AND WHAT SHOULD A MAIL-ORDER ADVERTISEMENT LOOK LIKE?

I FEEL very definitely that there are principles which govern the writing of successful mail-order copy, and I am drawing, of course, on the long practical experience of myself and of various mail-order friends.

The first requisite is simplicity.

The second is "saying it forwards and backwards"—that is, repeating the same thing in different words, so as to make the message clear to the meanest comprehension.

The third is avoidance of "fine writing."

The fourth is giving in plain words all the details as to size, weight, finish, portability,

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postage, and so forth, which are necessary for the buyer to know before he can make up his mind.

Mail-order text should be capable of being spoken across the counter to a customer in person.

I am well aware that there are many people of a high degree of education and intelligence who buy regularly by mail-order, and there are mail-order houses which can show names of customers typical of the flower of the land.

Nevertheless, these exalted people respond to simple wording of the kind suggested above. It does not put them off ; and for a lower order of intelligence it is absolutely necessary.

PUTTING THE WORDING INTO ADVERTISEMENT FORM

Mr. Claude Hopkins of the U.S., an Advertising Expert who is said to have made more money for his clients and more money for himself than any other advertising man in the world, has strong views as to the building of a mail-order advertisement.

He says that people are habituated to

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reading eight-point type in newspapers, and that mail-order advertisements set in type as small as eight-point WILL be read, provided the headline is sufficiently attractive.

I agree. I will state positively that some of the type can be as small as six-point and yet will be read. I will also affirm that the general text of a mail-order advertisement need never be set in type larger than ten-point.

The above helps to determine the right size for a mail-order advertisement. When one has allowed space for a bold headline, a suitable and relevant illustration, and a few lines of large-point general text, then the size of the rest of the advertisement will depend on just how much space is needed to illustrate and describe the goods or the service, in type not larger than ten-point, together with sufficient space for the coupon, which can be set in eight-point or six-point.

Thus, one arrives at an "economic size"; and I agree most definitely with Mr. Hopkins that if one were to take an advertisement as constructed above, and spread it into a space twice as large by increasing the size of everything proportionately, and adding a

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decorative border, the results from that advertisement would not be twice as good—they would be considerably less than twice.

It may be taken as a principle in mail-order advertising that the most profitable size is the one which is the least size possible for inclusion of what one MUST insert.

The “economic size” is governed by the nature of the message. If that message requires a half double-column to explain properly, then trying to boil down the message to a two-inch single column space will be fatal.

But, on the other hand, I have seen a case where the message was very simple and the economic size was as tiny as one-inch single column in a daily newspaper. Visualise more than two thousand cash orders (not enquiries for a free sample) accruing from a space as microscopic as that! It is a fact from my own experience, and it helps to prove how closely people will read even a tiny advertisement which is interesting to them.

THE RIGHT USAGE OF PICTURES

If one uses the word “picture” as conveying an illustration of a fanciful nature (as

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apart from bread-and-butter illustrations of the goods themselves), then the picture is only a small factor in pulling power.

But a picture which is necessary for conveying the story (as with a course of memory training) may help considerably. A mail-order advertisement can, however, succeed without having any picture or illustration at all; without having any display type at all (except the headline); and without any embellishment of the typographer's art.*

In fact, a real mail-order puller is scarcely ever "beautiful."

The pulling power of a proposed mail-order advertisement cannot be judged from the point of view of beauty and pleasant open spaces, or from the aspect of dignity, or from any other criterion of publicity rooted on the undoubtedly artistic general publicity advertisements which occupy full pages in our highest class of weekly papers.

* The main reason for using the professional typesetter in mail-order is that he dresses one's message presentably in a suit tailored to measure; whereas many newspaper offices provide "reach-me-downs" in typesetting which are too slovenly to create a proper impression.

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A tightly-packed, bread and-buttery, plain-Jane mail-order advertisement will beat it, when judged on direct sales.

It has been frequently asked whether WHITE SPACE should be used in mail-order advertisements, in order to make them more attractive-looking and more easy to read.

The answer from experience is that mail-order firms gravitate, through their own experiments in advertising, towards using advertising space almost as closely as editorial space is used.

Some even pack their message tighter than editorial text. They use a smaller face of type—and yet manage to get their advertisements read and answered.

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CHAPTER V

TO WHOM SHOULD A MAIL-ORDER ADVERTISEMENT BE ADDRESSED ?

AND HOW TO ADDRESS IT? THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPEAL

USING the general press, the cost is *1d.* to *2d.* per inch single column per 1,000 copies net sales. This seems marvelously cheap. Yet, the advertiser will be exceedingly lucky if even one person in a thousand buying the paper will respond to his advertisement.

In fact, with most mail-order propositions, the question is how to get one out of 10,000 to respond. The practical figure can even be as low as one in 25,000, when selling a high-priced article.

It follows from this, logically, that the headline should endeavour to attract, out of a big mass of indifferent people, those excep-

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tional ones who are interested in your article or service. In actual mail-order practice, it is found to be the right kind of headline. For instance :

OWN YOUR OWN BUSINESS !

This is a phrase which has been used successfully for years by advertisers who have special machinery to offer, whereby a young fellow can start in a speciality business in his own town or suburb. The headline is of no interest to anyone except the fellow with ambition enough to want to be his own master in business.

The art correspondence school will head its advertisement :

DO YOU LIKE TO DRAW ?

It will thereby sift out the men and women with a certain amount of art talent already, and with a desire to make money out of that talent.

Headings such as these are known as "eliminary." They brush aside every reader except those likely to be buyers. The advertiser doesn't want a mass of en-

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quiries from people who are merely idly curious—he wants genuine, warm, wide-awake enquirers.

One of the bugbears of mail-order advertising and a dead expense very difficult to get rid of—in fact, impossible to get rid of entirely—is the person without serious intentions who wastes the advertiser's money over booklets and follow-up letters and literature, and eventually has to be put into the advertiser's "morgue" as being an absolutely dead one.

The success of a mail-order advertisement cannot be judged simply on the number of enquiries. The valuable practical figures are cost-per-order and average-value-of-order.

It is found that papers differ surprisingly in the conversion ratio—i.e., the percentage of enquirers who actually become buyers. This figure may run (on a given article) anywhere from 10 per cent. to 50 per cent.—one paper yielding buyers at the rate of 1 to 10 enquirers, while another journal brings them in as high as 1 to 2—even though precisely the same booklet and follow-ups are sent to every enquirer.

For example, a certain mail-order adver-

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tiser has used extensively the daily press, the weekly popular journals and the popular monthlies. Out of all these, he has obtained enquiries at a rate which he considers reasonable ; but, for some unexplainable reason, the people who reply to his firm from monthly magazines are not nearly so convertible as those who answer the very same kind of advertisement in a weekly paper or a daily.

I do not intend to suggest that monthly magazines are bad media for any proposition. That would be a short-sighted view. I mention the above only because it is an actual practical experience of one mail-order man, and gives point to the general discussion of variation in media.

Since the object of every mail-order man is sales—not merely enquiries—the use of an eliminatory headline is current practice and strongly to be recommended. It is no use trying to drag in extra readers by a headline which seems to embrace everybody. Such a phrase as

AMAZING BARGAINS !

would annoy many people who read further and discover that the bargains are only in a

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special line of blankets. One would do much better by displaying the headline as

AMAZING BARGAINS IN BLANKETS !

or else, by having a picture of blankets so prominent that the reader can see at once what the advertisement is about.

In fact, the picture can itself be “eliminary.” A housewife fingering a pile of blankets lovingly would do the work ; but to show just a picture of a housewife looking delighted without showing what she is delighted about, would be wasteful mail-order advertising.

So, here is a first principle in constructing a mail-order advertisement—state or show at once the kind of thing you want to sell.

That is what I mean by “addressing” a mail-order advertisement—directing it at the exceptional people, out of a big mass of readers, who are your most likely prospects.

ADDRESSING THE RIGHT PEOPLE THROUGH THE POST

The cost of a postal message is anywhere from £5 to £10 per 1,000. So, one has to be

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particularly careful to avoid wastage in addressing.

Avoidable wastage is sending to people who cannot possibly be considered as buyers. It seems an obvious thing to throw these out—yet in practice it is not easy. Some firms seem to give up the problem and send out their mailings in a very indiscriminate way. That is why you yourself, no doubt, have received circular letters from time to time which made you exclaim to yourself: “Why on earth are these people wasting money on ME?”

Suppose the article were a pocket magnifying glass, capable of being attached to the thumb, and inclined in any direction. This might be highly useful to doctors. In fact, one would be safe in addressing a mailing shot to the entire list of 40,000 doctors in the British Isles, with the feeling that almost every one of them would have good use for such an article. Engineers might also be a likely list. One would have to verify this by typical enquiries amongst men in that profession. Architects are doubtful. Chartered accountants would probably have no use for it.

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Auctioneers and estate agents would be ridiculous as mailing lists.

One can sometimes proceed on lines such as the above, and do one's own elimination by addressing only to the most likely people. That is why the cost of £5 to £10 per 1,000, through the SELECTIVE post, as compared with only 1*d.* to 2*d.* per 1,000 through the BROADCAST press, can be made a paying form of advertising.

Beyond the above method of elimination, one should also bring out at the head of one's sales letter, or printed folder, some indication of what the message is about—so as to save the time of a busy man, and not make him annoyed by being dragged into reading something which has no practical interest for him.

Put yourself in the position of a man receiving a telephone call from a perfect stranger. If you have ever received a 'phone message from an unknown who starts with a long round-about talk without telling you the subject on which he is calling you up, you will have felt annoyed and irritated. When a stranger rings you, you want to know quickly the subject of his call, so as to judge whether it has any interest for you.

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It is both courtesy and good business to state quickly the reason for a call—whether by 'phone or by post.

AROUSING DESIRE— THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPEAL

Every actual sale is the weighing down of one scale of a balance—desire to possess, against desire to keep one's money.

People who have to work hard to earn their money do not part with it lightly. The free spender is the man who inherits money or makes it easily through lucky speculations.

Most people are hard spenders—and the advertiser has to sweat hard to pile sufficient weight on to HIS scale of the balance.

The creating and arousing of buying desire is a very difficult art. It depends, in the first place, on selecting which of the many human motives one intends to work upon. These motives have been classified many times. One of the best analyses is that given by Mr. James Davis Woolf, which I am summarising as follows :

I.—The Desire to Make Money.—This comprises not only the profit which a business

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man can make by buying and selling goods, or the extra earnings that an employee can make by developing his natural abilities. It also includes the saving of money through long wear in articles of apparel, or lost cost of running and upkeep in the case of a motor-car, or elimination of waste as with an improved form of gas cooker. It is a buying motive which appeals to both men and women, to both young and old.

2.—The Desire to Attract the Opposite Sex.—This is very frequently used in general publicity in connection with soaps and toilet preparations. It has also been used in mail-order to promote the sales of books and magazines which will widen one's general knowledge, and so may be regarded as making one more attractive in social conversation. There is nothing objectionable in this. It is natural and normal to want to be liked and admired. In many cases, such advertising has been the means of promoting self-respect and a higher standard of education, manners and general appearance.

3.—The Desire to be Popular.—It is tragic to be "left out of things"; to be a nonentity at social gatherings. On this theme have been

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based advertisements which offer something whereby a man or woman can cultivate social accomplishments—such as proficiency in games and sports, dancing, musical instruments, the art of conversation, the art of public speaking, etc.

4.—**The Desire to be in Style.**—One has heard that “a woman would rather be dead than be out of style.” This is exaggerated, of course, but founded on truth. Many advertising appeals are based, successfully, on stirring up a woman’s desire to be right up-to-date in dress, personal appointments and household furnishings—to keep in line with what fashion leaders are wearing, doing, or buying for their homes.

5.—**The Desire to Escape Criticism.**—In the U.S., a great deal of advertising has been devised on this theme. The public have been urged to avoid bad breath, perspirational odours, faults of etiquette, etc.—and big advertising successes have been made on those lines. The same idea has not been used anywhere near so extensively in the British Isles. Perhaps we are a less suggestible people than the Americans; or, probably, we are a more closely-knit nation than the “melting-

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pot " of America, and most of us think that we know very well what is the right thing to do. Nevertheless, it is a theme one should keep in mind as a possible lever in advertising : " What will your friends think of you ? "

6.—**The Desire for Praise.**—This is closely related to the desire to escape criticism. It can be applied to the selling of nice things for the home as well as nice things for the person. The advertising message suggests that friends who come in to see one will be delighted with what one has to show them or offer them ; and think they will be pleasant enough to put their admiration into words.

7.—**The Desire for Health.**—This is fundamental. It has been used not only in the sale of proprietary medicines and appliances, but very widely indeed in the advertising of breakfast foods, hygienic packing for foods, heating and cooling devices for the home, holiday resorts, sports outfits and thousands of other advertising lines.

8.—**The Desire to Escape Pain.**—This is chiefly used by advertisers of proprietary medicines which have a soothing effect.

9.—**The Desire for Comfort.**—Huge cam-

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paigns have been based on the appeal for comfort, which is practically universal—comfort in footwear and hatwear, comfort in clothes, and still more, the devices which make home life or office life more pleasant and more enjoyable. There is obviously no limit to the use of this theme.

10.—**The Desire to Save Time.**—An appeal to this motive is much more limited in our own country than in the U.S., where hustle is considered a positive virtue. Lots of business men are not particularly attracted by the argument that such-and-such a device will save office or factory time. They would be much more moved by a demonstration that it will save shillings or pence in actual materials which have to be bought for the office or factory. Nor do housewives respond to it very readily—unless the saving of time can be shown so large as to provide them with a big, extra slice of leisure to devote to amusement or social pursuits.

11.—**The Desire to Save Energy.**—This is closely allied to comfort. It has been used in the advertising of rubber heels and in a few other directions.

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12.—The Desire to Conserve our Possessions.—Many housewives are extremely proud of keeping their possessions in apple-pie order, and a scratch on a piece of furniture on the part of the husband may cause an upheaval which seems to him quite out of proportion to the damage. Advertising messages to women can therefore be based on this theme—not only in the preserving and the caring for furniture, but also in the purchasing of draperies which will be sunproof and not subject to swift deterioration in strong sunshine.

13.—The Desire for Beautiful Possessions.—There are many people who will lovingly acquire articles for the sake of their beauty and the pleasure given by that beauty, rather than for reasons of utility or the desire to impress their friends. Beyond doubt, the appreciation of beautiful things has expanded considerably in the last few years amongst sections of the population who had hitherto been content with utility only.

14.—The Desire to Emulate Persons Above Us.—Advertising has frequently featured the names and portraits of well-known society, stage and business people as owners or users

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of advertised goods. This is a kind of appeal which is usually effective.

15.—The Desire for Enjoyment.—This is natural and normal. It is also on the increase. The selling of labour-saving appliances for the home can be made by pointing out the large slice of time saved by their use, setting the housewife free for the enjoyment of extra leisure hours.

16.—The Desire to Gratify Curiosity.—A curiosity headline will always increase the replies to a press advertisement—but, as stated before, this is not necessarily good business. The use of a “curiosity message” on an envelope covering circular matter will undoubtedly quicken the opening of it and assure more attention to the reading of it; and in this connection I definitely recommend it.

17.—The Desire of Appetite.—This is universal, and is naturally used in the advertising of table delicacies.

18.—The Desire for Safety in Buying.—This is vitally important in mail-order. It is met by the mail-order man’s GUARANTEE

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of "Satisfaction or money back" (or some similar phrase). The exact wording of a guarantee for different forms of mail-order businesses will be dealt with in a later Chapter.

19.—**The Desire for Cleanliness.**—This theme has been worked upon in the selling of toilet articles enclosed in transparent wrappers, so that they can be seen and inspected without being touched promiscuously. It has also been used in the selling of food-stuffs, such as biscuits, which can be advertised as "untouched by human hands."

20.—**Parental Love.**—Many millions of pounds worth of goods are purchased by parents every year for the use and enjoyment of their children. This is a very strong appeal indeed for many classes of goods.

21.—**Fear.**—This wording is used sometimes in the selling of insurance, both life and fire; and in the marketing of safety appliances, as with glass for motor-cars which does not splinter, automatic signals to motor-cars following, etc.

22.—**Ambition.**—This highly important motive has been dissected in detail under some of the previous headings.

WHICH MOTIVE SHALL WE CHOOSE?

The answer depends entirely on the article to be marketed.

But this can be said, definitely: Base a single sales message on one motive only. Feature it strongly; drive it home.

If ambition is the motive to be touched on, work it "forwards and backwards." Then finish off with a Guarantee which appeals to "safety in buying," and relieves the prospect of any doubt in that direction.

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CHAPTER VI

HOW TO DEVISE SPECIAL OFFERS FOR MAIL-ORDER

HERE are three kinds of offers which might conceivably be made—in fact, have been made—by various correspondence schools.

Suppose you were asked to choose, as the basis of a mailing shot, between these three kinds of offers :

1.—The price of our Course is now (18th January) 8 gns. On 18th February we will raise the price to 10 gns. Meanwhile, you can join at 8 gns.

2.—The price of the Course is 10 gns. But from now until 18th February, we will let you have the Course at the specially reduced price of 8 gns.

3.—The price of the Course is 8 gns. But for those who join before 18th February we will add, without extra cost, another Course,

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or set of books, to the value of 2 gns., making 10 gns. in all.

There are three horses in this race. One horse is 8 gns. now, 10 gns. later. The second horse is 10 gns. now and later, and 8 gns. in between. The third horse is 10 gns. worth for 8 gns. On which horse would you put your money?

For myself, I know which horse I would back. It would be horse No. 1—8 gns. now and 10 gns. in a month's time.

This is not mere theory. It is based on proven fact. Horse No. 1 has been run with enquirers who had previously been followed up to apparently the uttermost, and were regarded as almost hopeless; yet, this horse galloped to the winning post at a selling cost of only 2 per cent.—a very outstanding result.

As to the reasons why this horse is superior to the other two, human nature is such that it is always more ready to buy on a rising market than on a falling market. If the reader of such an offer is convinced that the raising of the price will take place, definitely and beyond question, in one month's time,

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and that never again is he likely to be able to buy the Course at the lower price, he will naturally want to seize Opportunity before Opportunity vanishes.

Horse No. 2 is asking people to buy on a falling market—not nearly so effective.

The running of Horse No. 3 depends very much on the value in the prospect's mind of the extra books offered; and such an offer is liable to carry the suggestion that the extra material is a makeweight to a Course which is not complete in itself.

That is why, of the three offers listed above, I would vote unhesitatingly for an offer of the nature of No. 1.

But, I realise that many mail-order propositions do not allow of such a "rising market" offer being made. The usual situation is that an offer has to be couched in terms of bargain price or bargain quantity.

If this be so, then what is the correct advertising procedure?

GIVING A REASON FOR THE OFFER

First of all, one must give a reason for the bargain offer which sounds true and also sounds businesslike.

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It is not enough to say that "We have reduced the price from 30s. to 25s." The reader is naturally suspicious; his first thought is that the goods were over-priced in the first instance, and that 25s. is the natural business selling price of that article, instead of 30s.

Let us look at some of the ways in which *a business reason* has been given for a price reduction.

The tailoring trade is undoubtedly slack, in every city, during the months of January and February, because men are "making do" with their previously bought winter clothes, and are waiting until early Spring sets in before buying a new outfit.

So, tailors are particularly anxious to get extra trade in during their slack months, and here are the ways in which three tailors have presented a bargain offer at such a period.

1—"GETTING OUT OF THE DOLDRUMS"

"This folder presents to men who appreciate good tailoring an offer which is unique in the history of tailoring. The 'doldrums' of the tailoring trade are January and February—these are the slackest months of the year.

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"I want to keep my staffs busy. Hence this offer, which is a really remarkable one—as you will agree when you read the folder.

"From January 1 to February 28 we make no profits. On March 1 the usual prices will be resumed.

"Isn't it worth your while to order now?"

2—"STRAIGHTENING-OUT THE CURVE"

"Every business has its curve—a time when buying naturally tends to slacken. You see on the graph below the January curve in my own business.

"You will know that I cannot afford to have this curve. Steady turnover is essential to a tailor selling 8 gn. suits for 5 and 6 gns. I must maintain my turnover, even if I have to cut my prices another guinea-and-a-half to do it.

"My curve is your opportunity. I have 1,000 suitings in stock, generally priced at 5 and 6 gns.—worth 7 and 8. During January these will be sold at 4, 4½ and 5."

3—"A REAL SALE"

"With the exception of a small proportion, our clientèle consists of 'thinking' business and professional men.

"February is a quiet month with us, and in lieu of a sale we are prepared to arrange a discount or something special in the way of value, if you order now.

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"The Winter season has still a long way to run and if the suit or overcoat you are now wearing is showing signs of wear—then why not give us a call?"

"Spring deliveries are not yet in, but you are welcome to see patterns of the ranges shortly due, and make a selection on the above conditions, providing the suit is made before the Spring rush commences. You may take delivery at any time."

In cigars, bargain offers are difficult to devise, because most people know that cigars improve by keeping, and that there is rarely a question of deterioration because a cigar has been in stock for a long time.

Here is the way in which a mail-order cigar firm announced its once-a-year bargain sale:

4— "THE CAUSE OF IT ALL

"It is part and parcel of our service to customers to supply selections of FULL boxes of cigars on approval, so that they can sample-from-bulk before definitely deciding what to order.

"And when our customer has found the kind of cigar which suits him, he orders his favourite brand and returns the "broken-into" box to us.

"During November and December these broken-into boxes accumulate very rapidly, and by the time the New Year dawns, we find ourselves with thousands upon thousands of them.

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"At one time—many years ago—we used to offer these broken-into boxes of cigars to tobacconists, who were very glad to buy them at our bargain prices.

"And then it occurred to us that the proper thing to do—the *right* thing to do—was to give our customers the benefit of the bargains.

"And so we did—and have done ever since."

The large department stores, with their post-order offers, usually give a clear reason for the offering of extra special bargains. As for instance :

5—"Blank's are noted for their value in hosiery and gloves—the present offer (commencing to-day) includes a stock made for shipment abroad, cancelled at the last moment and cleared by force of circumstances to Blank's at half price."

Here is an American example, from a very large mail-order house :

6—"In this catalogue we are offering 508 price reductions on clothing and kindred merchandise. Why?

"Because the changes in manufacturing and wholesale market conditions since our last catalogue was printed make these decided price cuts possible. As it has always been the rule of this house to give the customer the benefit of every price reduction, we are following out this policy in sending you this new list of cut prices.

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"The goods shown here are almost without exception staple, standard products. Everybody knows this merchandise, and we ask you to compare these prices with those that are generally being asked. You will see how much you can save.

"In this price-cutting sale our regular guarantee, of course, holds good: Your money back if you are not wholly satisfied."

A West End store offered some remarkable bargains in men's underwear of high quality, explaining that these were Government Surplus from goods originally ordered for army officers; and being careful to explain the reason why these quality goods were not saleable in the ordinary way, viz., because the vests had long sleeves and the pants had short legs; being the reverse to the usual men's buyings. This sale was very successful.

Here is a remarkable example of an American bargain offer advertisement, issued on George Washington Day (his name being always associated with telling of the naked truth):

7—"THE TRUTH—THOUGH IT HURTS !

"Salesmanship—what crimes are committed in thy name! No one knows this better than a store buyer, and once out of so-and-so many times

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he tumbles for the caressing arguments of an overstocked manufacturer, with the result that merchandise bought to sell outlives its welcome and stays with us so long that we learn to call it by its first name.

"And so, on Washington's Birthday, what could be more fitting than that we group these stubborn items and tell you the blatant facts about them, leaving you to decide (now that you know their unhappy past) whether you can use them.

"To-morrow, should we sell everything mentioned in these seven columns, the profit therefrom would hardly be sufficient to keep a bobbed-haired flapper in hairpins for twenty-four-hours."

The bargain items were listed in a frank and humorous style such as the following :

"These 6 winter Coats must be pretty sad, for we've had them since 1926 and no one's wanted them. They're fur-trimmed and were formerly \$25 and \$29.50. Now—\$4.95."

"15 Pairs Dark Brown Spats. Nicely faded so no one will know you've just bought them. Originally, \$2.50—49c."

"Knitted Ties in patterns that may make you feel slightly cockeyed—2 of them that we tried to sell for \$2.50. Now—95c."

"\$14.95 golden oak chest of drawers—nobody wants golden oak, but you can easily paint it—\$7.49."

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MAKING SAMPLE OFFERS

Another form of mail-order offer, found by actual experience to be attractive, is where a firm says in effect : " You don't know what our goods taste like. So, before you order any quantity, we will let you have a sample free-of-charge."

This can obviously be applied to cigars, cigarettes, wines, delicacies in food-stuffs by mail-order ; and also in general publicity. It has frequently been used for tooth-pastes, shaving creams and beauty preparations.

The snag to be guarded against is that a very small sample, offered free-of-charge, is not really appreciated by the receiver.

No doubt you yourself have had tiny samples, at one time or other, of tooth-paste, shaving creams, and the like—and in all probability you accepted these in a very casual and uninterested manner, and if you used them personally, felt no sense of obligation to the manufacturer. You did not feel bound to buy from him because of his sending a small sample free. This is average human nature.

In order to get round that snag, one must

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enlist another aspect of human nature—which is, the feeling of moral obligation when the gift put into one's hands is SUBSTANTIAL and valuable. It is also human nature to feel a sense of obligation when one is trusted with something of value—even though it is not actually given to one, free, to consume to the uttermost.

For example, it would certainly not pay a cigarette firm to send two or three samples of cigarettes free to an enquirer. They would be consumed without any feeling of obligation.

But if the same firm sent out the same cigarettes in the form of a large, full box, and offered to let the enquirer smoke as many as he liked, without obligation, so as to satisfy himself that he liked them before he purchased the full box—and if he were given the alternative, in case of not liking them, of returning the remainder of the box without being charged for the cigarettes he had tested—then this is an offer which appeals to human nature, and experience has proved that very rarely indeed do people take a mean advantage of it.

In fact, an offer of this kind can be safely

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made to any man who has a letterheading or a visiting card.

In the line of cigars, the offer has many times been couched as : Here is the sample cabinet of a dozen cigars ; smoke them and find out which one you like best ; and then, when you have found one which pleases you, order 100 or more, and the sampling cabinet will be yours free-of-charge. On the other hand, if you do not specially like any of the dozen cigars, and do not wish to purchase 100 of any of them, then we shall charge the cabinet to you at only a nominal cost price. In any case, we will send the cabinet to you without asking you to send us any money.

This, again, is a form of trustfulness which appeals to the best in human nature, and it has been worked successfully over and over again.

In the line of wines and spirits, the offer has been made in the form of a " baby bottle," free-of-charge if the enquirer likes it and decides to order three or six full-sized bottles. The baby bottle, by the way, contains enough for half-a-dozen drinks. It is not a miniature with only enough to give a man a taste.

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MAKING PEOPLE PAY FOR SAMPLES

All the above examples of offers really have the effect of making the public pay—in one form or other—for the original sample. Either they actually pay for the sample itself, or they are required to send in an order for a fair quantity, whereby the firm is eventually repaid for giving the sample free.

In general, it is a sound principle to make the public pay for samples. Even if it is only a shilling or sixpence they are asked to pay, yet that small amount will keep away the idly curious and the “rotters”—it will ensure that people asking for samples have serious intentions of giving the product a proper test, and will be inclined to buy a decent quantity when they have satisfied themselves from the sample that the goods are right.

Samples should not be distributed BROADCAST without a request for them.

Even when one has obtained that request, the enquirer must either pay something towards the cost, or else be placed under so strong a sense of obligation that he is practically bound to buy in reasonable quantity.

THE SENDING OF SETS OF PATTERNS

Patterns of materials are not in the same category as smokes, wines, etc., and other consumable goods. The patterns are of no use to the enquirer except perhaps for giving to the kiddies to play with. So one cannot expect anyone to pay money for patterns.

But sets of patterns cost money to a manufacturer or mail-order house ; they should not be sent out broadcast without request ; it would be very bad selling policy to distribute them before one knows that the prospect is definitely interested and is expected to buy.

Therefore—no sets of patterns without a request.

THE BEST FORMS OF GUARANTEE

CHAPTER VII

THE BEST FORMS OF GUARANTEE

BUILDING up confidence with the stranger is a very important part of mail-order work.

One cannot reasonably expect that a man or woman who has never heard of one's firm before will trust one blindly, with money in advance, for goods which might not live up to the advertisement—might not prove satisfactory in actual usage.

People are suspicious. They are more suspicious of city firms than country firms. They have less confidence in a firm doing business from London, Birmingham, Manchester or Glasgow, than in a firm offering to supply goods from a small country town or village. This feeling is natural and logical.

So, the mail-order firm advertising from a city has to be very careful to remove any

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possible suspicions on the part of the stranger, and the ways to do so are as follows :

1—The Letterheading

This should be neat and dignified. It should suggest solidity. The very big and sound firms are never blatant in their letterheadings. And a mail-order firm should be equally reserved.

2—Printing the Names of Principals or Directors

The above may be demanded by the Business Registration Act—but, in any case, whether demanded or not, it is advisable to print them, so that the stranger whom one is addressing may know the names of the people in control of the firm he is asked to send his money to.

3—Adding the Names of Bankers

This is also advisable. By printing the name of the Bank which handles the firm's account, one gives an easy reference for anyone who might feel inclined to investigate BONA FIDES.

The mere fact that such a reference is given will tend to make people feel it un-

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necessary to investigate. One is inclined to assume that if the Bank allows its name to be inserted in a public advertisement, or on a letterheading, it is satisfied with the good faith of the firm in whose advertisement its name appears.

4—Using Newspapers which Guarantee the Advertisements in their Columns

Several daily newspapers make a prominent feature of guaranteeing the advertisements they insert, and especially the Postal Bargain adverts.

They keep on announcing in print that if any reader is dissatisfied with goods bought through any advert. in their paper, they will take it upon themselves to refund the reader's money, and themselves obtain satisfaction out of the advertiser.

In order to protect themselves, such newspapers demand of the advertiser, before his insertion is accepted, the filling up of a questionnaire which gives his trade references and certifies his ability to supply any reasonable demand for his goods out of existing stock in his possession. Certain weekly journals make the same guarantee to their readers.

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All this is very helpful to the success of mail-order advertising ; and, generally speaking, the paper which gives such a guarantee to its readers is a good paper in which to insert a mail-order advert.

5—The Advertiser's Guarantee to the Public

Over and beyond the above, the mail-order firm must give a clear guarantee to its potential public, and insert this guarantee in press adverts, and any printed matter sent by post.

The simplest form of guarantee is the wording : " Satisfaction guaranteed, or money back."

It can be extended further as : " Satisfaction guaranteed, or your money refunded—promptly and cheerfully, without quibble or question."

Here is an excellent way in which the same thing is extended still further :

" Perfect satisfaction or your money returned.

" This Guarantee covers everything we sell. If the goods you order are not to your liking, send them back to Blank's.

" Ask for an exchange, or for the return of your money. We will cheerfully exchange, or return

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your money. And not as a favour. It is in the contract with you. It is your right."

Another large mail-order house is very explicit indeed in its wording of the guarantee :

" WE GUARANTEE that each and every article in this catalogue is exactly as described and illustrated.

" We guarantee that any article purchased from us will satisfy you perfectly ; that it will give you the service you have a right to expect ; that it represents full value for the price you pay.

" If for any reason you are dissatisfied with any article purchased from us, we expect you to return it to us at our expense. We will then exchange it for exactly what you want, or return your money, including any carriage charges you may have paid."

Some mail-order propositions do not lend themselves to the same explicitness of guarantee, because of the perishable nature of their goods, or because of the usage of their goods. For instance, a firm selling seeds cannot say " Return the seeds to us if they are not satisfactory," because the seeds have been planted. Here is the way in which a seed firm gets over this difficulty in a very straightforward way :

" We do not guarantee that every one who plants Blank's seeds will harvest a good crop. No seedsman could possibly guarantee a first-class crop in

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every case. Ultimate success depends upon conditions of soil and climate that are beyond human control. Some failures may occur even with the best seeds that can be grown. Consequently no honest seedsman could assume responsibility for an amount beyond the actual price paid for the seeds. All seeds and bulbs sold by Blank's are the best that it is possible to produce, and are sold under our Double Guarantee.—FIRST: We guarantee safe delivery on all seeds, whether sent by post or rail. SECOND: Anyone who is not thoroughly satisfied with the product raised can have his money back any time within the year. Such is the double guarantee that protects all who plant seeds bought from Blank's."

Again, a firm selling Empire fruits by mail-order has to be careful in the wording of the guarantee; and the following form is used:

"All the produce we offer is exactly as described in our literature, both as to quality and as to average quantity (which naturally varies according to the size of the fruit). It will reach you in perfect condition for eating.

"If you should have any complaint, return the case of produce to us within 5 days of receiving it, and we will refund your money in full and at once. We shall not deduct for any apples or oranges you may have eaten before discovering a cause for complaint."

An interesting form of Guarantee is that

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used by a tailor, in the form of a "Triple Option":

"If for any reason whatsoever any Suit, Overcoat, or Raincoat supplied by this Firm fails to please you, return it within seven days and we will, at your option, either correct it, replace it, or return your money in full."

THE PRINTING OF THE GUARANTEE

Four of the examples are used in printed literature—catalogues and folders sent by post. They are too lengthy for a small press advertisement.

So if it be that one has a lengthy guarantee such as the above, and one still wants to insert in a small press advert. an indication that the firm does offer a definite guarantee, the best way to do so is to bring it down to the very simple and quick wording: "Satisfaction or money back."

These simple words are, by now, very well known to the public, and suggest that the advertiser will give them the full satisfaction they expect.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE BEST WAY TO FOLLOW-UP THE ENQUIRY

ASSUME the enquiry comes from a press advertisement :

Many advertisers are inclined to feel that when an enquiry comes in, it is their due, their right, a recognition of, and tribute to, the excellence of their goods—and that the enquirer is keen to purchase them.

But this is far removed from practical fact. The enquirer is quite usually lukewarm. He just lazily thinks there “ may be something for him ” in the article or service advertised, and he “ may as well send a postcard and see what they say.”

For instance, several correspondence schools have found that out of a mass of enquirers, not more than one in ten can be converted into students, however vigorously they press for enrolments, and however extended their follow-ups may be.

FOLLOWING-UP THE ENQUIRY

In the selling of goods, an experienced mail-order man often considers it satisfactory if one enquirer in three actually becomes a customer.

All this tends to show how lukewarm the enquirer is, and how necessary it is to reckon that **the real work of selling has just about begun when the enquiry is received.**

The very first thing, of course, is to send him a catalogue, prospectus or booklet, in which the goods (or service) have been set out in illustration and description as fully and as appetisingly as possible. This is undoubtedly difficult. It is an expert job. In Chapters 9 and 10 I am endeavouring to set out the main principles on which successful mail-order catalogues, prospectuses and booklets have been compiled by men experienced in mail-order.

With the catalogue, etc., goes a form letter covering it. The exact wording of this letter is not of great importance. The gist of it is a "thank you" for the enquiry; a mention that the enquirer will find full particulars in the catalogue, etc., enclosed, and, whenever possible, a note that his particular question

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is answered on Page so-and-so, marked in blue pencil.

Indeed, this method of marking in blue pencil is a definite help in concentrating the reader's attention on a particular page, and even where he has not sent in a definite question, it is a good point if this method of marking can be made to seem a natural thing for the advertiser to do.

As I have said, the exact form of wording for this covering letter is not of special importance—because the catalogue, etc., will be telling the story completely. The prime object of the letter is to personalise the answer—to make the man feel that he is really being attended to by somebody in authority—that the head of the establishment is glad to hear from him and to answer him.

And this being so, it is logical to match-in the man's name and address at the head of the letter. Personalising should never be omitted in answering an enquiry.

THE REASONS FOR SILENCE

If the enquirer has received one's catalogues, prospectus or booklet, and makes no reply whatever to it, what is one to assume?

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Don't assume it has failed to reach him ; nor that he has failed to read it. Both are practical certainties.

Assume, rather, any one of the following points :

1.—The price is too high for him.

2.—The price may seem reasonable to him, but he has not the spare cash to pay for it immediately and in one lump.

3.—He has not been fully convinced that the value or pleasure or comfort or utility he will receive from the article or service will outweigh the value of the money he is asked to give for it.

4.—He is of a procrastinating habit of mind, unable to come to a decision easily or quickly ; and of a type which has to have its mind made up for it by someone speaking with a voice of authority.

5.—Since sending in his enquiry, some other desirable way of spending the money has been thrust on his notice, so there is active competition against one's article or service—not necessarily the competition of a similar article, but perhaps something else which would also be nice to own and possess, some other form of knowledge or career which would be useful and profitable to acquire.

6.—The catalogue, etc., has convinced him on all points except one, and he hesitates to enquire about that one point, with a kind of instinctive feeling that if he does write and ask, he may be over-persuaded against his own better judgment.

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These six types of people are well-known to me through mail-order experience. I have seen them dragged out of their burrows by a personal letter which asks them, as a favour, to state just what is the difficulty in their mind, and enclosing a stamped addressed envelope to make their reply easy and costless.

In one case I have in mind, over 50 per cent. of the men who replied to this particular letter said they were satisfied with the value of what the advertiser was offering, but they simply had not got the money to pay for it. That is why they did not reply before. The other 50 per cent. of answers were divided up, in different proportions, between the other categories set out above.

It can be taken as a general principle that the above six reasons account for non-replying, and the mail-order expert, in preparing his follow-up system, does not "pester" the enquirer by just repeating what has already been said at full length in the catalogue, prospectus or booklet, but rather, he endeavours to get round the obstacles by taking them one at a time, in an order which seems to him most likely to produce good results.

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For instance, he does not take the first obstacle first—that the price is too high—because the only real answer to this is to lower the price, which is a bad procedure for use amongst a whole batch of his enquirers.

Remember, in dealing with a mass of enquirers, one does not know which objection belongs to which particular men. Even if one definitely knew that 50 per cent. of the enquirers had not sufficient spare cash to lay out, yet which of the 100 these 50 are would be a matter of sheer guesswork.

So, the mail-order man tackles any of the other obstacles first. He may elect to endeavour, in the first follow-up, to get round the man who habitually procrastinates. There are quite a lot of these.

In the second follow-up, he may try to get round the competitive article or service which is invisibly blocking his way.

In the third follow-up, he may use the device of the stamped addressed envelope going with a letter asking as a personal favour that the enquirer shall state his difficulty. And then, finding out who are the people who cannot afford to pay a lump sum in

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cash, he can emphasise the method of paying by instalments ; or offer specially to extend the method of instalment payment which has already been set out in the original piece of printed literature.

The above applies to an article or service costing £5 or more—in other words, involving a sum of money which most people do not part with lightly or easily.

If the article to be sold were much less in price, say 30s., then such an extended series of follow-ups would not usually be necessary to dig out from their burrows the people who would actually buy, nor would the profit on the article allow of such an expensive follow-up.

Each case has to be treated on its merits when devising a follow-up system. There are no rigid rules.

TIME-INTERVAL BETWEEN FOLLOW-UPS

For instance, it might be thought that the interval of time allowed to elapse between the follow-ups would be something on which

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one could give a definite and perfectly general ruling.

On this point I once listened to a Direct Mail Conference at which a man very experienced in mail-order spoke on the subject ; and out of the experiences of business men related at this Conference, no two agreed as to exact procedure.

Quite definitely it depends on the type of business. But this I CAN say. "The longer you leave them, the colder they get."

If a follow-up system, spaced out 14 days between letters is not prospering, then shorten the interval to 10 days or even one week between letters.

Of course, there is a limit to this shortening process. If one were to fire one's ammunition at intervals of only three days between each letter, the probability is that one would be hitting a number of men who had already decided to buy, and annoying them, and at the same time wasting one's money on needless preaching to the converted.

A follow-up system at 3-day intervals would be regarded, in my opinion, as "pestering" by most of those who received it ; and

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to many people it would seem that the advertiser was so terribly anxious to make a sale that there must be something wrong with what he was trying to sell.

Dignity and good salesmanship are against the follow-up system at 3-day intervals. One week between is perhaps the minimum.

I ought to mention here, at the opposite extreme, that if one were selling a piece of machinery to technical buyers by mail, the proper interval might be as much as two or three months between follow-up shots. The reason is that a man who enquires about technical machinery is rarely in a violent hurry to purchase it. He does not enquire because he is in actual frantic need of it at the moment. He is looking on it as something he may possibly like to buy in the future. He feels that he ought to be acquainted with the latest developments of technical machinery in his particular line. He feels that he ought to have this knowledge in hand, ready for the moment when it might be advisable, from his business point of view, to put it into operation.

So, in selling technical machinery, costing perhaps several hundred pounds, to industrial buyers, one should space out one's follow-up

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shots every two or three months, so as to try and reach the man when circumstances in his business are changing and are bringing about the moment when he will definitely need to have one's piece of machinery in his factory or office.

SHOULD ALL FOLLOW-UPS BE PERSONALISED ?

If the follow-up is in the nature of a letter it should certainly be matched-in with full name and address of the enquirer. This is a courtesy to him, and he definitely expects that courtesy.

But one need not go so far as to try and fool him that a form letter is an individually typed letter written to him alone. In other words, one need not send follow-ups under letter-rate postage ; one can, and should, send them at printed-matter rate. (Of course, to take advantage of the cheap rate, such typewritten letters must be posted in batches of at least 20 at a time, and " declared " as such across a post office counter.)

The very first letter of all can be sent at letter rate, but the ones following should not

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be. This means an important saving of money in a case such as that mentioned at the head of this Chapter, where a firm converts only 10 per cent. of its enquirers, and the remaining 90 per cent. never actually buy at all.

In working the follow-up system, one never knows who are the likely 10 per cent., and one has to shoot one's ammunition at the whole 100. This can make quite a heavy expense for many a mail-order firm. Halfpenny postage reduces the cost considerably.

HOW LONG IS IT WORTH WHILE GOING AFTER AN ENQUIRER ?

Assume that the case is one which needs a series of five follow-up letters, spaced out at intervals of a week for the earlier letters and 10 days for the later ones.

Having fired off all one's ammunition at the enquirer, having told him all that one possibly can about one's product or service, having endeavoured to get at his doubt or difficulty and overcome it, and getting no answer beyond silence, is one then to throw the enquiry into the waste-paper basket ?

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That enquiry may, in the case of a heavily-priced article or service, have cost anywhere from 10s. to £1 in press advertising. So one ought to regard the enquiry as having a 10s. treasury note pinned to it; and should one throw a 10s. treasury note into the waste-paper basket?

No! Keep those enquiries carefully. At the end of six months send out a printed folder to the whole of them. Some of them will buy. In a business which is running successfully in general, because it is offering good value, the response to that mailing shot will be definitely profitable.

Six months later send them another printed folder, with the same story dressed up afresh.

There are experienced mail-order firms who do not regard an enquirer as dead until they have been after him for at least two years. Other firms find that one year is right for them. If the period decided upon is less than one year (before regarding the enquirer as useless), then one will probably be allowing valuable and profitable business to slip out of one's hands.

THE FOLLOW-UP TO CUSTOMERS

Another and quite different form of follow-up is that sent to people who have already bought one's goods.

It has to be devised in quite a different frame of mind to the follow-up to an enquirer, because the customer already knows about one's goods or service, and he ought to be well satisfied with it.

He does not need convincing so much as reminding, and the chief point about a reminder is to make it a pleasant one.

This will be dealt with at greater length in Chapter 15.

THE MAIL-ORDER CATALOGUE

CHAPTER IX

HOW TO PREPARE A MAIL-ORDER CATALOGUE

A "HARASSED SALES MANAGER" wrote to a business magazine and said:

"Can't somebody tell us how, with lower values and less business, he made expense ratio keep its equilibrium without reducing remuneration?"

"Will some catalogue compiler tell us how to make our next issue something more than a mere recapitulation of style and price? There must be a selling value that is not being realised. A catalogue is not an almanack!"

"When travellers' reports are full of 'Trade bad in this district,' 'Customers' shelves are full,' 'Frightened to sell on account of slow payments,' and so so, I want some help—practical, as well as psychological."

In response, the Editor of that magazine asked me to give some hints on the subject, and these were published.

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The sales manager in question took up the hints and made full use of them. A year later, he wrote :

" I am afraid that if I stated the facts about the value of our 1923 catalogue, they would sound fulsome.

" August sales 100 per cent. up. Last week's sales a record ! "

So I am reproducing here such of the hints as specially apply to a mail-order catalogue—being points which have definitely helped a man oppressed with difficulties to increase his sales figures in such a highly satisfactory way, and also being points with an application far beyond the particular business of this sales manager.

INDIVIDUALISING THE PAGES OF THE CATALOGUE

There is no selling value in dead uniformity of pages. The only reason I know of for making them uniform is to save trouble for the compiler. It is so simple to devise a " generic page," and then tell the printer to " carry on " with the rest of the pages in the same general style.

But, if one looks at the matter for a moment from the READER'S POINT OF VIEW, uniformity

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is as dull as a set of multiplication tables. It lacks freshness. It lacks "news interest." It suggests that the catalogue is not worth studying in detail for profit-making possibilities, but is just a lifeless list of goods and prices.

The very first point in improving the sales value of a catalogue is to make the pages different, to individualise them, to present a different selling "story" for each article, by different arrangements of letter-press, illustration, and decoration, **in brief, to make each page a separate advertisement in itself.**

Consider these figures :

5,000 Catalogues of 48 pages and cover :

Cost, including blocks, say ... £200

Cost of each page, about ... £4

Anyone taking advertising space in a trade paper in times of "difficult selling" would spend a great deal of thought in trying to make that advertisement **STAND OUT** beyond competing advertisements, even if as little as £4 were to be spent on it. Perhaps an extra couple of pounds would be spent

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on illustrations and blocks for the advertisement in order to achieve this end.

But when it comes to a catalogue, few compilers set themselves to make *each £4 page a distinct and separate advertisement which will stand out against the corresponding pages of their competitors' catalogues.*

This is a very practical line of thought, because the reader will be turning over the pages of our competitors' catalogues as well as our own. He will be making a rough comparison between the presentation of the goods in our catalogue and the presentation of competitors' goods in theirs.

The only things one needs to have uniform in a catalogue are the founts of types which are used ; the style in which the name of the firm is displayed ; and also, perhaps, the nature of the border or other decorative matter used.

There is no need to keep the colour the same. I have in front of me, as I write this, several catalogues where the colour of the paper and the colour of the printing has been varied, so as to throw up by contrast certain

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parts of the catalogue and special lines of goods.

One of these has been printed throughout in black and red, with the exception of two centre pages in black, dark blue, and light green—making a violent contrast to the other pages, and throwing up the goods on these pages in a very striking way.

Another catalogue, for women's dresses and underclothing, is printed throughout in plain black on white paper, with the exception of eight centre pages, which stand out strongly through being printed by photogravure, in photo-brown on buff paper. Further, the matter relating to house policy, and the method of ordering its goods, is printed in black and red on pink paper. The detachable order forms are printed on the same pink paper.

So, there are three kinds of paper and printing used in this catalogue, and the result is practical and sales-effective.

Another catalogue I have in front of me, for men's goods, is printed in plain black on white paper, with eight centre pages brought out in full colours. The index of the book is

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printed on a light green paper, in order to make it easily found and easy to refer to.

All these three catalogues are noticeably different on almost every page, the only uniformity being in the three points mentioned above, type-styles the same throughout, firm's names shown the same throughout, and borders and decorations having a "family similarity" without being exactly the same on every page.

THE NATURE OF THE FOREWORD

By all means let us get away from that very usual type of foreword which concentrates on "blowing a loud trumpet" about our firm and its wonderful record of success.

The foreword will only be read and remembered if it takes up the other man's point of view, tells him something which will be of direct interest to himself, and suggests lines of thought by which he can personally profit.

In a catalogue addressed to the consumer, just the same thing applies. Here are some simple but telling words in front of a seed catalogue :

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“TO OUR FRIENDS, OUR CUSTOMERS :

“ There are two very important things in this book : Vegetables and Flowers.

“ The food supply of the whole world is short, and it is necessary for farmers and gardeners to produce more food this year than ever before. It will pay you to increase your Vegetable garden. Vegetables are the basic food of life !

“ But just as Vegetables are the foundation, so Flowers are the climax to the finest there is in life.

“ Nothing can add to the beauty of your home like a flower garden. For the sake of little children, and for all that is good in the world, surround your home with the refining and uplifting influence of Flowers.

“ We hope you will grow both Vegetables and Flowers.

“ Waiting to serve you, we remain,

“ Yours faithfully,”

Not a word in all this about the firm and its size and its success ! Nothing but the reader's point of view.

THE COVER OF THE CATALOGUE

The catalogue needs to be recognisable, at a glance, as coming from a particular firm. But, further, the cover ought to be changed

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each year to give freshness to it, and to identify it with the year of issue, so that it is not confused with catalogues of previous years.

There are two excellent methods of identifying the catalogues of a firm :

1.—By a special colour scheme. One firm I know has a particular shade of orange brick-red, which is identified with the firm, and is used in all its literature. The front cover is in this colour, with lettering in black, and it makes the catalogue easily recognisable as belonging to them. If there is any colour scheme identified with your own firm, it should certainly be carried into the cover of your catalogue.

2.—By displaying the trade-mark of a firm large and bold. There are dozens of ways in which the same trade-mark can be used, in larger or smaller sizes, by a difference in the method of producing the block, or by stringing a series of trade-marks together into a pattern. This is an excellent means of identifying the catalogue.

Over and beyond these two points, there is a possibility of adding a line or two of wording

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which will take up the point of view of the reader. This can be varied from year to year.

It is convenient in many cases to have a knotted string run through the top left-hand corner of the catalogue, so that it can easily be hung on a nail near the desk of the man or woman who receives it, and be handy for reference at any moment.

ADDING "ATMOSPHERE" TO THE GOODS

Whether a catalogue be addressed to the consumer as in most mail-order cases, or whether it be addressed to the retailer, who can also be sold to by mail-order, does not greatly matter in this discussion—because, in each case, it is a question of making a sale, and making the sale by WORKING EMOTIONALLY on the customer.

Every experienced mail-order man will agree that this point of "working emotionally" is a vital one. For instance, nineteen annual boot and shoe catalogues, addressed simultaneously to the retailer, give him all the plain prosaics of style and price; but

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only the exceptional catalogue goes a step further—a very big step—by adding “atmosphere.”

Here are five separate lines of thought in regard to methods of “atmospheric” illustration :

- 1.—Linking up the goods with their purpose—“association of materials.”
- 2.—Suggestive backgrounds which carry a FEELING towards the article portrayed—“association of ideas.”
- 3.—Unusual decorative backgrounds.
- 4.—Engravers’ “tint effects.”
- 5.—Goods specially “posed” by the photographer.

Some good instances I have seen are the linking up of sports wear, offered by a men’s outfitter, with photographs of various kinds of sports and recreations (as for instance, river sports) ; of associating a gold watch for evening dress wear, extra flat model, with a background of theatre tickets and opera-glasses ; and of a baby carriage shown in

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Kensington Gardens near the well-known Peter Pan statue, which is such a Mecca for children and their nurses.

These are simple examples. They are obviously capable of being extended and elaborated, in almost any direction, for the presentation of goods. The thought is LINKING UP THE GOODS WITH THEIR USE.

The second line of thought in catalogue illustration is to inject "atmosphere" by the use of backgrounds which are symbolical or bear relationship of "feeling" to the article portrayed. E.g., one can show a typewriter against a background of luxurious furniture and furnishings, linking it with the idea of "aristocracy." One can surround a bottle of perfume with a vague suggestion of a bowl of flowers from which the perfume has been derived. One can show musical instruments in association with an evening shaded light and a couple of books, linking all three together as part of the evening's leisure and recreation. One can display cigars in conjunction with an ash-tray and a glass of after-dinner port.

UNUSUAL DECORATIVE BACKGROUNDS

The third line of thought is to make the background a piece of formal decoration, but yet of an unusual or striking character.

This can be easily achieved by photographing the goods against a cloth with a strong pattern, or leather, or even wallpaper.

Incidentally, it cuts out the charges for expensive artists' work. It cost no more to secure a photograph of the goods with a decorative background than to photograph them bare.

THE USE OF TECHNICAL ENGRAVING EFFECTS

The general idea of engravers' "tints" is familiar to experienced advertising men, but only a few people "outside" seem to be acquainted with the wide possibilities which lie in this method of enhancing illustrations in "line."

An engraving firm which knows its job can suggest scores of ways of combining tints, so as to make a simple line drawing stand out very strongly.

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Not many engravers push this part of their technique, because they say : " Our customers might resent our trying to tell them." But if you ASK an engraver to come along and show you some of his technical possibilities, he will be most ready to share his peculiar knowledge with you.

SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EFFECTS

The fifth line of thought is enlisting the aid of a first-class commercial photographer to " pose " one's goods effectively.

Four excellent examples of the commercial photographer's art are in front of me as I write this. Two of these display children's socks and feminine negligée posed on the living model ; and the other two convey an overcoat and gloves arranged as a retailer might himself display them in his windows. This latter is particularly applicable to a catalogue sent to retailers.

PUTTING SALESMANSHIP INTO MAIL-ORDER CATALOGUES

The American mail-order houses have carried this matter to a high pitch of art ; and one can gain a lot by sending for some of the

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catalogues of the big American houses and studying them.

It will be found that first of all they follow out the principle suggested at the beginning of this Chapter—i.e., to make every page look different. Each page is presented as an advertisement in itself.

Next, you are sure to find on a given page that one or more articles are brought out much larger and more strongly than the rest. On a boot page there will be one boot, or two, shown much larger than the others. On a women's dress page, one particular model or more will be featured extra large. The reason for this is either :

1.—That particular pair of boots has been proved from past sales records to be a particularly good seller.

Or 2.—Those particular dresses are expected to be the ones which will "catch on" most strongly.

The American mail-order house believes in the principle of PUSHING SUCCESS. It is just as practicable in this country as in the U.S.

In the large American catalogue, every article shown is expected to pay a profit on

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the space it occupies, this space being carefully costed. If a year's sales records show that it is not paying its way, then in next year's catalogue the space allotted to that article will be reduced.

On the other hand, if it shows a good profit this year, then next year it will be given a larger space.

The third principle in the American catalogue is the great care given to the description of each article. Good salesmanship dictates that the prospective buyer, on reading the description, will get a clear answer to any question in his (or her) mind. He may want to know the exact size and dimensions, weight, portability, colour of finish, varieties of finish, and other questions of this kind which are usually answered in a shop by the customer seeing the goods for himself or asking the shop assistant about them.

The mail-order catalogue has to act like an extremely intelligent shop assistant—in fact, like a shop assistant very rare in actual life. It must anticipate the customer's natural questions, and answer them in words which are perfectly clear to the meanest comprehension.

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The fourth point is that the American mail-order houses rarely use superlatives when they are describing goods. Strict orders are given to the assistants at work on the compiling of a catalogue to cut out the "est" in their text and substitute something else. They are required to give in the first place a close and accurate description of the goods; and then to add a few vivid words which will drive home the pleasure or comfort to be derived from those articles.

All the four points mentioned above are emphatically points of salesmanship-in-print.

BOOKLETS, FOLDERS AND LEAFLETS

CHAPTER X

HOW TO PREPARE MAIL-ORDER BOOKLETS, FOLDERS AND LEAFLETS

THE mail-order house with a large variety of articles needs a catalogue.

But when it comes to the selling of a small range of articles, or the selling of a service, then a booklet or folder is the right thing.

For instance, a dyeing and cleaning service, a cigarette firm, a correspondence school—these need booklets or folders rather than catalogues.

The same applies to the selling of goods to the retailer by mail-order, as well as to the general public. Let us dismiss for the moment the point as to whether your particular proposition should be presented in the form of a booklet or a folder, and consider the building of both pieces of literature together.

A very interesting “printing question-

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naire" is published by a paper firm. It sets out no less than twenty-nine questions which can be in the mind of a man who is constructing printed matter for his firm to send through the post, either to buyers for manufacturing firms, to retailer buyers, or to mail-order "prospects" amongst the general public.

Each of these questions goes deep into the building of a folder or booklet.

It will be helpful to discuss some of them, and the bearing they have on the nature of one's printed literature.

WHAT IS TO BE SOLD ?

First, they ask : " What is the nature of the goods or service to be sold ? Is it a new product, or old product ; new service, or old service ; new market, or old market ; article of utility, or luxury ? What is the expected unit of sale ; amount per sale ; margin of profit on an average sale ? Is it a seasonable article, or all-the-year-round goods ? "

The unit of sale, in the case of a new and untried proposition, is a very important factor to consider in a postal campaign. To be specific, if it is an offer to the retailer,

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is he to be asked to take quarter-gross, half-gross, or full-gross?

An obvious line of thought, from the manufacturer's point of view, is to make a strong effort to sell the full-gross by offering an extra large discount off list price; and to offer half-gross and quarter-gross at smaller discounts. The thought is that the retailer will be sufficiently alive to his own interests to snatch at the biggest profit by ordering the largest quantity.

But alas! it does not always work out like this in the retailer's mind. He is inclined to say to himself: "Considering this is a new line, I don't think I ought to venture on more than a trial order of quarter-gross. But, perhaps, that big fellow down the street will be ordering a full-gross, and getting a much larger discount than I, and then he will cut prices lower than I can offer."

If this thought sticks firmly in the retailer's mind, he will probably decide that he had better not order at all.

Of course, it is always possible to tell the trader that the retail price is fixed by the manufacturer, and is a minimum which must

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not be cut—but everyone knows how often such a condition is evaded.

The only real answer to what is the right unit of sale is to have a representative find out, by personal exploration, how much the average retailer is inclined to stock. This must give the basis of the unit of sale.

SIMPLE MATHEMATICS OF MARGIN OF PROFIT

Following on these remarks comes the relationship between average sale, percentage of returns from a mailing shot, and one's own "mark-up" to allow for selling expense and show a profit.

It is perhaps not widely known that this can be reduced to a very simple formula:

If X is the average order in £'s,

If Y is the percentage of orders from a mailing "shot,"

And if Z is one's percentage "mark-up" above prime cost of goods,

Then the formula is $X \times Y \times Z = a$ "constant."

Determine the "constant" which applies to one's own particular case and shows a margin of profit, and insert that number in

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the formula. Then, one is safe for a profit if X, Y and Z, multiplied together, equal or exceed this figure.

Suppose a satisfactory average order is £4, percentage of orders is $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and mark-up is 50 per cent. The "constant" is 500. If the average order falls to £3, then either the mark-up would have to be $66\frac{2}{3}$ per cent., or the percentage of orders would have to be $3\frac{1}{3}$ per cent., in order to secure the same profit.

If the mark-up remains at 50 per cent., the percentage of orders falls to 2 per cent., but the average order rises to £5 10s., then the three figures total 550—and a better profit is secured.

IS IT AN ARTICLE OF UTILITY OR LUXURY?

This sounds a very elementary question, but it is not as simple as it sounds. The typewriter is an article of utility to a business man, and a luxury to a household. The fountain pen might be regarded as a luxury by a shopkeeper in a poor neighbourhood, while the high-class departmental store would consider it as a utility line. And so forth.

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This affects not only the nature of the paper and printing, designed to sell the goods, but, further, whether one can build one's mailing lists so as to get circulars about luxury goods only into the hands of firms with a good-class trade ; or into households with a rental of so-much and over.

From this follows the size of one's printing order as well as its nature.

WHAT IS THE INTERESTING FEATURE OF THE GOODS ?

The second question asked by those keenly inquisitive people is : What feature is there about this merchandise or service which will interest buyers ?

Suppose we turn back to a very early advertisement for the typewriter, and see what were the features considered the most interesting by the makers of the machine, and the reasons for which they felt it should be purchased. Quoting from the actual advertisement :

" Editors, authors, clergymen, will find the typewriter the greatest possible relief.

" There is no more acceptable, instructive or beautiful CHRISTMAS PRESENT for a boy or girl.

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" And the benevolent can, by the gift of a typewriter to a poor, deserving young woman, put her at once in the way of earning a good living as a copyist.

" It is the size of a sewing-machine, and is an ornament to an office, study, or sitting-room. It is certain to become as indispensable in families as the sewing-machine."

How strangely this reads in view of the present-day market for typewriters ! Neither editors, authors, nor clergymen are large buyers of typewriters (except the portable kind) ; few fathers think of putting one in their little boy's Christmas stocking ; the charitable person is no market at all ; and who, to-day, would buy it as an " ornament " for an office, study, or sitting-room ?

In another piece of early literature about the typewriter, it was mentioned in quite a casual way that :

" The merchant, the banker, all men of business, can perform the labour of letter-writing with much saving of valuable time."

That perfunctory mention turned out to be the typewriter's real great market.

So the second point raised in this questionnaire is by no means an idle question. To find out, by inquiry, what the public see

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for themselves in one's goods may be illuminating, and may possibly alter vitally the tenor of one's literature.

WHAT HAS THE LITERATURE TO COMPETE AGAINST ?

The third point of the questionnaire asks :
“ What competitive literature already occupies the field ? ”

A certain firm in the North of England make a line of goods which is sold all round the world as well as in this country. It has a dozen or so of serious competitors in England and Scotland, and at least the same quantity in the United States, reaching after the same export market.

The head of this firm is careful to acquire a collection of booklets and folders issued by his home rivals, and also those issued by his American rivals—the latter being obtained through the medium of an American concern.

Altogether, this North of England man has a collection of scores and scores of rival literature for study whenever it is a question of getting out fresh printed matter.

On the other hand, there are some firms which seem scarcely to know what their

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competitors are doing in the way of printed messages sent through the post.

It is clearly a valuable point to know definitely what one has to beat when preparing literature for one's own firm.

WHERE DO THE "PROSPECTS" LIVE?

Fourthly, the inquisitor asks: "Where are the possible buyers or users located? In large cities, in small towns, or in the country?"

This question is, perhaps, more pertinent to postal advertising in the United States than it is here; but, nevertheless, it needs to be in one's mind as likely to affect the style of wording and illustration. City people will naturally be more sophisticated, less primitive in outlook; they will expect a higher standard of presentation; they will not be farmer-like in their tastes.

DOES THE MAN OR THE WOMAN DECIDE?

Continuing, the inquiry is made: "Are the possible buyers male or female?"

Now here is a much more interesting

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question than appears on the face of it. In a recent mail-order advertising campaign, the big point to decide was : Shall this appeal be made to the householder or to his wife ? Which of the two will really decide about purchasing ? Will the man resent this offer being put up to the wife instead of to himself ? Or will he see this particular purchase as really coming under her jurisdiction ?

The tendency, I am sure, is for the wife and mother to become more and more the buying partner of the household. Plenty of sound and sensible men let their wives buy their socks, underwear, shirts and collars, and assist in the choosing of the right cloth for a suit of clothes.

The majority of household furniture, and, certainly, all the furnishing draperies, are decided upon by women ; holidays and hotels are largely planned by wives—and the husband as a buyer is becoming restricted to a few articles of personal adornment, to wines and smokes, and, of course, to his own fancies in office furnishing.

There is a lot of hidden point in this question, and it is well worth considering whether the woman is not the real buyer of

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the goods one has to offer. If it be so decided, the appeal in the printed literature will need to be "feminised."

WHAT ARE THE BUYERS LIKE ?

The questionnaire then flashes a lamp on to this aspect of the possible sale : " What kind of people are they ? Refined, average, or coarse ? Studious or superficial ? Limited education, average education, broad education, technical education, or professional education ? "

The question would have its application, for instance, in a booklet addressed to a doctor (or to an architect)—professionally educated, and naturally inclined to look deeply into things. A booklet about the same product addressed to nurses (or to builders) would need to be written in a different key ; and a booklet on still the same line of goods, prepared for the general public, would make allowances for the superficiality of the average man or woman, and would probably drive home the argument by striking pictures rather than by the scientific or technical reasons which would carry weight with the doctor or architect.

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HOW DO THEIR TASTES RUN ?

Next follows a list of key-notes on which a piece of printed matter can be based :
“ To what kind of an appeal will they respond ? Aesthetic, bizarre, or common sense ? Humorous, scientific, or economical ? Dominant, subdued, or conservative ? Colourful or quiet ? ”

A Bond Street tailor comes readily to mind as one who makes his advertising appeal to the “ young bloods ” of the town. He plumps for the æsthetic and the paradoxical. In his particular case it seems to have answered well.

But I should not care to sponsor the selling of a crop and roots manure to farmers on any such line of appeal.

In brief, one has clearly to try to adapt one's style and wording and illustrations to the tastes of the class of people one hopes to secure as customers.

WHAT IS THE STANDING OF THE “ PROSPECT ” ?

Financial and social standing do not run parallel in England to-day, with its multitude of “ New Poor ” and its very mixed

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class of "New Rich"—but, nevertheless, when addressing an appeal direct to the consumer, it is possible to grade one's tone of wording to a certain extent to conform to the social standards of the class of people addressed.

For instance, in a piece of literature recently addressed to the "landed gentry," a quotation was given of the words of a user of the class of goods offered. The point was, whether he should be mentioned as "a certain rich man," or "a certain wealthy gentleman," or "a well-known man of wealth."

It was felt that if the word "rich" were used in an appeal to the landed gentry—many of them impoverished—it would convey the idea of a bloated profiteer, and make a bad impression right from the start. After considerable discussion, it was decided that the most acceptable wording would be "a well-known wealthy gentleman."

Again, the question arose as to whether the goods should be offered as a "saving" of so-much, or an "advantage" of so-much, or at a "discount" of so-much. It was felt

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that the latter two words would be more acceptable than the former.

As an instance of another kind, in an offer sent out by post to a couple of hundred thousand names taken from directories—almost broadcast—it was desired to eliminate answers from people of poor social standing, and this was done through the coupon. Instead of asking for the name and address to be written in by hand, space was left for the *name only*, and the request was made: "Please cut this out, and pin it to your visiting card or printed letter-heading."

Any replies which did not fall in with this request were treated as doubtful from the credit point of view.

FOR WHOM ARE THE GOODS TO BE BOUGHT?

The next question on the list is worded: "Buying for whom? For company, firm, or self? For family, husband, or wife? For mother, father, or children?"

This is worth consideration. Suppose a man on salary is asked to buy a piece of

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expensive office equipment for his firm. If he is a progressive kind of man, he will probably be very much in favour of the idea of having the latest appliance in his office, and of making his department as efficient as possible. If he is of the conservative, timorous, "head clerk" type of mind, he may be afraid of its reducing the *personnel* of his department, making his post less important, and adversely affecting his prospects of salary increase.

But if he is the proprietor of the business—the man who actually has to pay out his good money for the appliance—he is likely to look neither at the ornamental nor the "keep our jobs" argument, but to what extent it will save money for the business; what the terms of payment are; and how long the machine is likely to function efficiently before it becomes scrap metal.

While this is well known to sellers of office appliances, yet the same line of thought can run into the marketing of many other types of goods. A man **BUYING FOR HIMSELF** is influenced by motives which differ from those which move him when he is buying for the firm or for his household.

WHO OPENS THE MAIL ?

Skipping over some questions which relate more to American conditions than English, we come to this very pertinent question : " Who opens the mail—office boy, or mail-clerk or secretary, or proprietor, or housewife ? "

This question has a bearing on two points of postal publicity.

1.—Shall we use printed-matter rate or letter rate ?

2.—Shall we print a " curiosity message " on the envelope, so as to be sure that it is opened and read when sent under a half-penny stamp ? If the message is addressed to large firms, it can be taken for granted that neither the head of the firm, nor any of his chief executives, will see the envelope. The letters will all be opened by a subordinate, and the opened letters alone placed on the desk of the man to whom the message is addressed. So, in these cases, it is mostly sheer waste of money to use a three-halfpenny stamp when a halfpenny stamp will carry the message through the post.

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If the circular matter is being sent to retailers, then the proprietor himself will be opening his letters. In this case, it is often advisable to wash out the effect of his seeing the green stamp, by printing a "curiosity message" in a bright colour on the envelope to induce him to open and read. (It is, of course, far cheaper to have this little bit of printing carried out than to spend an extra penny on postage for each letter.)

In addressing the housewife, the "curiosity message" may also have its value, and here the types of envelope used will be important because, as she takes it up in her hands, she gets her first impression—favourable or otherwise—towards what is inside.

In addressing to the professional man, tests have PROVED that a halfpenny stamp is sufficient.

There are exceptional cases where a circular sent to a householder will need to go at letter rate postage—where the offer is of a very confidential character, and should not be opened by "any one"; or where it is highly "personalised."

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HOW WILL IT BE READ ?

The questionnaire asks next : “ Will the printed matter be submitted to casual observation ? continued observation ? or close study ? ”

On the answer to this depends whether one has to print expensively, or can print cheaply.

Temporary bargain offers, and offers of goods which will either be bought immediately or not at all—these do not call for expensive printing, and, in fact, would not sell more goods through the use of good inside or cover paper.

On the other hand, if one hopes that the booklet will be kept for reference—if one expects that it will live for six months or longer with the “ prospect ”—and if it deals with goods which may not be required now, but will be needed later on—then all signs point towards giving the “ prospect ” something which he or she will be glad to KEEP and refer to.

Also, this opens up a wide field of thought in the direction of what one can do to ensure the booklet being kept. Can one add some

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useful tables of reference for the technical buyer—or for the housewife, and so give a strong personal reason for keeping the booklet in a desk or shelf?

WHAT IS THE PRINTED MATTER EXPECTED TO DO?

Here we come to another vital question, and one to which clear thought is not always given: "What, specifically, is the printed matter to do? Is it to bring enquiries; effect sales; introduce product; introduce service; or introduce the house?"

If it is to make direct sales, then, usually a carefully devised, perhaps elaborate, folder or booklet is needed. There may be an accompanying letter as well, and, of course, a reply form or a reply envelope—something which makes it easy for the "prospect" to order. In brief, one sets to work to devise a very complete "selling story."

But there are many cases in postal selling where it would not pay to send out an elaborate "shot" broadcast—where it is cheaper to try for enquiries only, and then concentrate one's expensive printed matter on the people

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who do enquire. It clearly calls for an entirely different kind of form-letter—one which does not tell the whole story, but only arouses sufficient interest to get a reply postcard filled in and sent back.

This point in the questionnaire also directs attention to the kind of literature the purpose of which is solely to “introduce.” Here, the wording needs to be brief; the paper and style of presentation will be the chief part of the printing outlay; and, if reply cards are used, it is not to be expected that many of them will be returned.

SIZE AND WEIGHT

A very practical question comes next: “Is there a limit to the mailing weight or space to be occupied?”

Assuming that one’s message is a bulky one, very near to the weight limit, the two ways of getting inside that limit are by using a thinner paper, or by trimming the edges and narrowing the margin of white space.

Trimming has sometimes to be done at the last moment, when the head of a firm suddenly thinks of another enclosure he

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would like to include with the "shot"! But it may spoil the effect of the folder, and thinner paper is often the right solution.

In regard to the actual size of the folder or booklet, one usually makes up the lay-out to dimensions which will cut out of standard printing paper without appreciable waste. Any printer will furnish a list of sizes of papers.

BOOKLET, FOLDER—OR WHAT?

The next question on the list asks whether one's message had best be presented in the form of a book, catalogue, booklet folder house organ, envelope-stuffer, illustrated letter, or "broadside."

The general answer is: If the message is intended to be KEPT by the "prospect" on his shelves—or in a handy drawer—then it had best be in a BOUND form, either a catalogue, a booklet, or an actual book.

The other classes of printed matter are right for the TEMPORARY message—something which is in the nature of an immediate offer, or is intended to produce action quickly—or not at all.

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The big advantage of the folder and the "broadside" is that one can smash out one's message in large type across a big page, use large illustrations, and bring out other salient points in a bold and arresting fashion. This cannot be done in a booklet, simply because of the limited size of page.

Also, the folder or "broadside" provides the opportunity of using various folds for a request form, or order form, or any part of a message which needs to be locked into a separate compartment from the rest.

If one's message is of the "by-the-way" order, then, clearly, all that is needed is the small leaflet to be inserted with current correspondence—in brief, an envelope-stuffer.

WHERE WILL THE BOOK BE KEPT?

If it is intended to be kept on the "prospect's" shelf, then, naturally, it should conform to one of the accepted sizes for a book.

But some interesting little commercial books I have seen are designed for a man to carry around with him. They contain reference tables, etc., which he may need to refer to constantly. This means vest-pocket size.

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WHAT SHOULD BE THE NATURE OF THE TEXT?

One has to decide whether the text is to be of first importance ; secondary to illustrations ; continuous story ; series of short articles ; long headings ; short headings ; popular ; or technical.

In front of me as I write this are booklets illustrative of all these styles—such as a booklet about tooth paste, and one about dyeing and cleaning, in the form of a continuous story broken up by side-headings ; and one about printing and one about cover paper, which are cut up into a series of short articles each occupying a page or two, and each dealing with a distinct aspect of the subject.

There are also folders in front of me which are full of text ; and one of the reverse order where an illustration occupies the whole of a page 20 by 14 inches—the wording being secondary to illustration.

All of these are good examples of postal and mail-order advertising—and they show how varied the nature of the text has to be, depending on one's goods and general message.

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WHAT STYLE OF TYPE?

If one is not very familiar with type-faces, and how they combine together, it is best to have a competent printer to advise.

Certainly every "face" speaks in a different tone of voice.

In my opinion, drawn lettering helps very materially with most forms of commercial literature—especially in selling anything in the nature of a "luxury" article.

Apart from drawn lettering and decoration, there is a revived fashion just now for the use of "florets"—little ornaments cast in type-sizes and kept in stock by most good printers.

Some of the florets are beautiful in themselves, and when intelligently used in combination with type they are a big help in lifting a message out of the strictly commercial.

There are three more queries set out in the questionnaire. They relate to the nature of the illustrations, the inks to be used, and the paper which is to be the background of the message.

All these are unquestionably important, but probably too technical for discussion here.

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TITLING THE BOOKLET

Obviously one will try to devise an interesting title for one's booklet, whether it is being sent to the general public or to trade buyers.

Here is a list taken at random from a collection of good booklets in my files. Some of them are mail-order booklets, some are general publicity booklets. But in each case the title and the nature of the product it covers should be helpful to a mail-order firm.

"A Visit to the Factory of Blank & Co."

"The Romance of a Business." (Issued by an insurance Co.)

"Picture Backgrounds." (Issued by a wallpaper firm.)

"Spring Suggestions." (Issued by a paper firm.)

"Service to Travellers." (Issued by a bank.)

"About Smoke Gifts." (Issued by a pipe house.)

"The Blank Dummy Covers." (Issued by a paper house.)

"The Human Side of an Industrial Corporation." (Dealing with a firm's welfare work.)

"The Handy Helper for Making and Mending." (Issued by a glue firm.)

"What is Best for the Boy?" (Issued by a bank.)

"Instructions for Operating the Blank Machine." (Issued by an office-appliance firm.)

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"The Blank Winter Book." (Dealing with the taking of photographs in winter-time.)

"The Blank Fairy Book." (Issued by a tooth-paste firm.)

"The Passing of Old London." (Issued by an Estate agency.)

"Progressive Sheep Raising." (Issued by meat buyers.)

"Wanted, a Correspondent—Salary \$15,000 a Year." (Issued by an American paper house.)

"Beauty for all." (Issued by a soap firm.)

"A Map of Man Iland, which appeared in 1610." (Issued by a motoring journal.)

"Her Personal Car." (Issued by a motor-car firm.)

"Asbestos and Its Products." (Issued by an asbestos firm.)

"Etiquette, Entertaining and Good Sense." (Issued by a silverware firm.)

"How to Lubricate Your Car—and How to Lubricate Correctly." (Issued by an oil company.)

"Homes, and How to Paint Them." (Issued by a paint firm.)

"A Definite Plan for Your Business Progress." (Issued by a business institute.)

"The Business of Running a Home." (Issued by an insurance company.)

"Recipes for all the Year Round." (Issued by a proprietary food firm.)

"Homes of Lasting Beauty." (Issued by a textile firm manufacturing sun-proof fabrics.)

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THE LEAFLET

The leaflet is usually a condensation of a part or parts of a catalogue, booklet or folder.

It deals with just one or two articles ; and its size is such that it can be folded up and enclosed easily in an ordinary correspondence envelope.

If it is to be sent out more or less at random with ordinary correspondence, then it is sometimes termed an "envelope-stuffer"—an inelegant term, but more descriptive than "leaflet."

Anyone who can devise a booklet or folder will have no difficulty in boiling down some of the same matter into the small space of a leaflet.

But one ought to have clearly in mind the SCOPE of the leaflet and the many business uses to which it can be put.

Here are 14 such uses. The leaflet can :—

- 1.—Refresh the mind of the buyer concerning the points that induced his first purchase of your product.

- 2.—Tell the buyer how to use your product to the best advantage.

- 3.—Tell the buyer of all the uses to which the product may be put.

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4.—Tell the buyer how to care for the product, so that it will give the best service.

5.—Acquaint the buyer with other products which you make or sell.

6.—Secure names of buyers for mailing list.

7.—Induce the buyer to send for samples of other products which you make or sell.

8.—Secure the names of friends and acquaintances of buyers for mailing list or for distribution of samples.

9.—Tell the story of careful and clean handling of product in factory and workshops.

10.—Give the buyer information about the size and character of the company at the back of the product.

11.—Make clear to the buyer the care used in selecting materials.

12.—Counteract specific or vindictive efforts of competitors.

13.—Bring suggestions or information that will help you to improve your produce or extend its sale to other fields.

14.—Carry testimonials from other users to help in strengthening the confidence of buyers.

“ KEYED ” RESULTS FROM PARCEL ENCLOSURES

I once tested No. 5 as parcel enclosures for a certain firm, together with order forms

BOOKLETS, FOLDERS AND LEAFLETS

of a special colour (for "keying" purposes), and had a special tab kept on results for the ensuing six months.

These keyed returns showed definitely that the plan was well worth while—and it was then continued as a regular piece of routine, without troubling to "key" results any further.

In order to avoid repeating the same enclosure to any one customer, the packing department were directed to change the leaflet every fortnight, and to go on changing it until the set of leaflets was completed, when they started again with Leaflet A. Of course, this does not absolutely prevent a duplication of leaflets to the same customer, but it is a rough practical way of getting near to it without going to the trouble AND COST of selection.

SECURING RECOMMENDATIONS OR LISTS OF LIKELY "PROSPECTS"

This is a use of the enclosure which can be very valuable indeed for mail-order work in its continuous and circulative effect.

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To ask a satisfied customer to give the names of a few friends is not a great trouble for him—nor an outstanding favour—and my experience is that a large percentage of people are perfectly ready to do a good turn in this way. It gives them the opportunity of enjoying that Boy Scout feeling—"to-day's good deed"—and, in fact, there is no need to be apologetic or diffident in asking for the favour.

TELLING THE BUYER OF OTHER USES FOR THE PRODUCT

No. 3 is an excellent line of thought !

You will agree that the other man cannot possibly know as much about the uses of the line as the firm which makes it—and that, usually, he never troubles himself to find them out. So, why not tell him ? It cannot do any harm—and it may do a lot of good.

For instance, a small booklet of one-and-a-half by five inches, about the uses of adhesive tape, listing no less than 101 ways in which it can be of service to the householder or the housewife—this is a very practical way of enlarging the sales of adhesive tape.

BOOKLETS, FOLDERS AND LEAFLETS

A useful addition to this line of thought is contained in suggestion No. 9—"To tell the story of careful and clean handling of product in factory and workshops." I know from housewives themselves that the middle-class wife and mother is getting much more careful—or, rather, much less careless—about hygiene than she used to be. Newspaper and magazine articles have set her THINKING. Advertisements by certain large firms have set her fearing the dangers which her children and herself are running every day through the dissemination of germs.

She would certainly be impressed, and favourably, by leaflets inserted with good products which tell her—and particularly SHOW HER in pictures—the extent to which metal hands replace the human.

FOR THE INDUSTRIAL BUYER

Along the lines of suggestion II, a certain manufacturing firm make excellent use of an illustration showing a scrap-heap of their product which had not passed their exacting standards, and had been thrown out by the inspectors.

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An illustration of this kind can, of course, be used again and again—and two lines of wording on the leaflet will “tell its story” to the industrial buyer.

Every live mail-order firm can find good business uses for leaflets amongst the 14 points listed above. Run through the 14 points again, cross through the ones you are already using, and tick the ones which are still unused by your firm.

ORDER FORMS

CHAPTER XI

ORDER FORMS

IF a man or woman untrained in mail-order be asked to produce a complete and thoroughly practical order form, the probability is that he or she would "fall down" badly.

It is not at all a simple matter.

When you look at the order form of some experienced mail-order firm, regard it as a product of highly concentrated thought. Every line in it means something. Every word in it has some object in making ordering easy and safe for the purchaser. The arrangement of the order table (the various columns to be filled in by the buyer) is devised to make it very simple for the customer to express just what he wants, *and also for the firm's own staff to understand him.*

If an order form is not thoroughly complete,

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and easy to fill in, the consequence will be that a routine staff will be puzzled as to what the man actually wants. If they are careless in interpreting his order, they will make mistakes which will annoy him ; and if they are not very careful about any point of ambiguity, it will mean a costly business of corresponding with him to find out what he actually does want, and at the same time annoying him, because "those fools at the other end don't seem to understand plain English."

The best way to learn about order forms is to get hold of those issued by experienced departmental stores and mail-order houses, and compare them with the rough order form which one has oneself sketched out—while waiting to see the production of experienced mail-order men.

One will find the Guarantee is repeated on the Order Form, although it is quite prominent in the catalogue or folder sent to the enquirer. The reason is that when a man is actually writing out his order, he needs to be reassured, at that very moment, of the good faith of the advertising firm, and its willingness to give "satisfaction or money back" ;

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and when the Guarantee is combined with the order form, the man knows instinctively that the document affords him a legal as well as a moral protection.

At the same time, the Guarantee should not be printed on the order form only. Show it also on the folder accompanying the order form, so that while one document goes out of the buyer's hands, the other remains with him.

In the mail-ordering of women's articles, it is very important to get colours and sizes correctly set down by the purchaser. One large mail-order house with which I am well acquainted ensures this in a three-fold way :—

1.—At the top of the order form, amongst other directions, is the wording, " Be sure to state the Colour and Size you require."

2.—At the foot of the order form is a large black hand, near the totalling-up space, pointing to the words : " Don't forget to state Size and Colour ! "

3.—And on the back flap of the reply envelope in which the order is to be sent are these words in heavy type and in Red : " Have you remembered to state SIZE and COLOUR ? "

Even with three reminders, some of its

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women customers do forget to specify those points—such is human nature !

ORDER FORM ; ORDER POSTCARD ; OR ORDER ENVELOPE ?

These are three postal devices for helping the customer to order—and all three of them can be right. It depends on the nature of the business. The order form is the most usual.

Question is often raised as to whether it should be loose with a folder or booklet ; or stitched-in, with a perforation line along which it can be torn off ; or be part of the folder itself, with a direction to cut it along the dotted line. I have heard the merits of these three methods argued back and forth by mail-order men of experience without any definite conclusion being evolved from the discussion which would make a positive ruling on the subject.

In brief, any one of the three is a practical way of getting business.

The order reply card is obviously useful if the article can be described in just a few words, where there is not a whole list of

ORDER FORMS

articles to choose from, and where no money is to be sent with the order.

The order envelope is a very convenient form for mail-order, but not easy to describe. One I have in front of me is a bag-shaped envelope of size $8\frac{3}{4}$ " long x $5\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. The order form is printed on the one side of it; the name and address of the firm are printed on part of the other side, together with various instructions about ordering. And there are marks and wording on this side which tell the customer how to fold it into three and gum down the flap.

His cheque or postal order, of course, goes inside the bag. He can also send Treasury Notes or cash inside the bag, but a specially printed warning tells him that if he does this, he must take care to register the envelope.

This is a point to be seen on many order forms in mail-order businesses, and it has its importance—because, if the letter should go astray in the post, the customer is sure to think that the firm has stuck to his Treasury Notes, and there is no way of proving that they have not cheated him. Of course, any decent mail-order firm would never stoop for a moment to such a procedure; but in order

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to guard themselves against any such suspicion, they definitely ask the customer to register the letter containing either Treasury Notes or coin, and they also ask him to cross a cheque or postal order.

A **CROSSED** cheque or postal order is perfectly safe. It is practically valueless to anyone other than the firm in whose favour it is made out.

ORDER FORMS IN TRADE MAILINGS

While an order form is essential in dealing with the general public, because it is a great help to them in ordering easily, yet one can agree that it is not so useful in sending an offer by mail to industrial firms or retailers—because the business man usually prefers to send in an order on his own official printed order form.

This is true. Nevertheless, there are retailers, and even big manufacturing firms, who do make use of the advertiser's own order form. It is a help in getting business out of them ; and for the people who prefer their own official order form, it acts as a definite spur to action in getting down to the actual work of sending in an order.

ORDER FORMS

So, for these two reasons, I am personally in favour of enclosing an order form in mailing shots addressed to business men.

A point arises here which does not matter with the general public, and it should be mentioned. One asks the public to send cash with order. One does not ask them to give references, because cash in advance is better than any reference.

But the trade buyer is naturally accustomed to buying goods on credit ; it is the thing to which he is habituated, and he resents being asked to pay cash in advance for anything, because it seems to him like a reflection on his credit standing.

On the other hand, a business firm selling by mail-order to retailers cannot prudently execute any and every order they may receive when their offer is sent broadcast to thousands and thousands of little men of whom they know nothing (except their trade)—so any prudent firm would ask for references before extending credit, and the way to do this in mail-order, without causing offence, is to print a panel or box with wording such as—

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“ If you are not already on our books, will you please give two trade references in the space below ? ”

FROM THE INTERNAL OFFICE POINT OF VIEW

When the order is received in a busy mail-order firm, it usually has to pass through several hands—clearers, checkers, counting house, packing room, etc. Each of these people have to make some mark or indication on it, to record the fact that they have done their part in verifying, executing, making book entries, making card index entries, or making follow-up “ tickles ” in regard to it.

None of these people know exactly what the others are doing, or whether they have properly carried out their work. So the well-organised business house sees that each one of them puts on the paper some sign or mark of having done his job.

This may call for quite a considerable blank space on the order form, so that the marks they make shall not be mixed up with the writings of the customer. The right way to allow for this is to print a box on the order form with a sufficiently large blank space, and the wording at the top :—

ORDER FORMS

“ Reserved for Office Use.”

In this space can be rubber-stamped such wording as the firm needs for internal purposes, with due space for the marking of clearers, checkers, counting house, packing room, etc.

The above applies both to order forms sent to the public and to those sent to trade buyers.

CHAPTER XII

WHAT KIND OF RESULTS ARE
REASONABLE?

IN my experience, one of the very first questions asked by a potential advertiser is: "What results shall I get from an advertisement in the 'Daily Blank'?" Or, "What results shall I get from sending out 10,000 circulars?"

He is quite right in thinking of results first before deciding on any form of advertising—and I approve of his attitude of mind, because where advertising does not bring tangible results, it becomes a doubtful investment.

But the answer to the particular advertiser can only be given after a thorough survey of his product, its price, the price of competitive articles, an estimate of the appeal it is likely to make to its public, and after reckoning up the cost of the advertisement or the mailing shot.

Results can differ so widely that the only way to discuss them in a practical book like

WHAT RESULTS ARE REASONABLE ?

this is to give instances of actual results, both from postal and press advertising.

RESULTS FROM THE POST

1.—A sports goods manufacturer sent a special offer by post to 1,000 householders in good-class residential districts of a large provincial city. The results was Nil—not a single enquiry, not a single order ! He was bitterly disappointed. But the nature of his offer was altogether wrong.

2.—A well-known insurance company has many times sent out mailing shots consisting of a folder and reply card. A response of only $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of enquiries is considered satisfactory by this company. It is extremely difficult to interest people in insurance by any form of mailing.

3.—A mail-order house which circularises lists of prospects several times a year receives orders from 1.5 per cent. to 3 per cent. A response less than 1.5 per cent. is considered bad. A response over 3 per cent. is considered very good.

4.—Many firms offering goods by post to prospects amongst industrial buyers or retailers are content with a response in orders between 1 per cent. and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., depending

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on the goods. A response of 5 per cent. of orders from "cold prospects" is sometimes reached, and is usually considered as good.

It must be remembered that any manufacturer is ready to lay out money in traveller's expenses for the securing of a first order from a new customer—and, in fact, to make a definite loss on that first order for the privilege and opportunity of adding a new customer to his books—and similarly, he should be prepared to incur a loss on the first order when his customer is secured by mail instead of through a traveller.

5.—If the object of the mailing is not to get direct orders straightaway, but to secure enquiries for a sample, or a descriptive booklet, then the response should naturally be much higher—and, in fact, usually is. A response of 10 per cent. is quite ordinary. The highest I have heard of in this country is a response of over 54 per cent. This came from a mailing shot by a manufacturing chemist to doctors, which offered them free-of-charge, a recently published booklet on which a nominal charge of 5s. was set. A response of 20 per cent. to 25 per cent., on similar free offers, is by no means extraordinary.

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6.—When a circular is sent to actual regular customers, instead of to mere prospects, then the response in orders is often 3, 5 or even 10 times higher than that obtained from precisely the same circular sent to people who have never dealt with the firm before.

The above shows clearly how widely different results can be from a postal offer, and how necessary it is to know all the circumstances of a particular projected advertising attack, before one can estimate what kind of results are likely to accrue.

In addition, if profits are to be estimated, one must know the cost of the mailing shot. For instance, a simple double postcard will cost only £3 10s. 0d. to £4 per 1,000 "all in" (including cost of printing, addressing, postage at $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and stamping and mailing).

A large folder without sales letter may cost from £7 to £8 per 1,000 "all in." A folder with sales letter, properly matched-in with name and address and with facsimile signature, can run from £9 to £12 per 1,000. And if there is an elaborate booklet instead of a folder, the cost may easily run from £12 to £20 per 1,000.

It will be obvious how much this factor of

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cost will affect the profitableness, or otherwise, of the mailing shot.

RESULTS FROM PRESS ADVERTISING

Recently, I worked out the total cost of space and the total nett sales of a large range of popular daily and weekly journals, covering a year's appropriation for a certain advertiser, and the result in figures was an average cost of $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ per s.c. inch per 1,000 readers.

This looks ridiculously cheap in comparison with the pounds per 1,000 readers quoted above for postal advertising, and one would naturally expect that press advertising would be far more productive.

But—first point, the above figure is for the tiny space of 1" s.c., whereas the story told in a folder sent by mail would easily fill two whole pages of a daily newspaper instead of 1" s.c. ; and also, it should be known and realised that one cannot expect even one person in a thousand who reads a newspaper or weekly journal to respond to a particular mail-order advertisement of small or moderate size.

Here are some actual figures :—

1.—The greatest response I have ever

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known was from a 1" s.c. advt. in a daily newspaper, for a 1s. article, producing over 2,000 orders at a cost of $\frac{3}{4}d.$ per order. This is a most unusual result. Yet it means that little more than one person in a thousand answered the advertisement.

2.—There are many Postal Bargain Column advertisers who reckon from 1s. to 2s. 6d. as the cost of an enquiry, and allow for it in their selling figures.

3.—Schools offering training for various careers are usually prepared to pay from 5s. to 10s. for an enquiry. A figure of 10s. for an enquiry resulting from moderate-size advt. in a popular daily or weekly could mean that only one reader out of 6,000 or 7,000 had answered the advertisement. Yet, because mail-order cuts out the cost of distribution (through travellers or through trade channels) figures such as the above do not sound heavy or unprofitable to the advertisers concerned.

Emphasising this point, there are training schools which have tried to sell by personal representative as well as by public advertisement, and have found by experience that the cost of selling through the personal representative was unprofitably higher than through the printed message.

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4.—In the selling of high-priced luxuries, such as motor-cars, gramophones de luxe, expensive radio sets, and the like, an enquiry cost through press advertising may run into pounds, and YET be profitable to the advertiser.

The above will show clearly how greatly results can differ depending on the article and its appeal to its public.

A great advantage of mail order is that one can very quickly determine one's selling cost through press advertising. It is not like sending out a traveller and having him report week after week, month after month, that he is "doing spade work," and that finally he will land big orders—while meanwhile his salary and expenses are piling up and are making a continual drain on his employer's money, without showing any very tangible results.

With mail-order advertising, on the contrary, the first couple of insertions in a few well-selected papers will either appeal or not appeal, and will show very quickly whether the article can be marketed at a profit, and just what the selling cost is likely to be in the long run.

With mail-order one gets quick action—quick decision!

RECORDING RESULTS

CHAPTER XIII

THE BEST WAY TO KEY AND RECORD RESULTS

Every mail-order advertisement should be "keyed."

Results from every keyed advertisement should be carefully kept in a day-by-day book, and totalled up at the end of each week.

The simplest way of keying—and probably the best—is to place in front of the address the words : " Dept. D.M." if it be inserted in " Daily Mail," or " Dept. D.E." if it be inserted in " Daily Express," and so forth—using letters which easily identify the journal when a coupon is received or an enquiry comes in by postcard or letter.

The public are well accustomed by now to seeing this wording on mail-order advertisements ; they know what it means ; they have

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no objection to it ; and they use it when replying.

Some mail-order advertisers state that 95 per cent. or more of the enquiries and orders they receive can be identified by the key numbers which the public have been careful enough to insert. The trade, however, do not use key numbers to the extent to which the general public do.

Other variations of keying are these :—

1.—“ Dept. 1,” “ Dept. 2,” “ Dept. 3,” etc., can be used instead of key letters identifying the journal—the number being varied with each journal and with each insertion. But if one is using key letters, one can easily insert “ Dept. D.M.1,” “ Dept. D.M.2,” “ Dept. D.M.3,” etc.—and this is an easier method of identifying papers AND insertions from the internal office point of view than using a number alone.

2.—Another device is to ask the enquirer to send in for “ Booklet 1,” “ Booklet 2,” “ Booklet 3,” etc.

3.—Or, one can use different numbers in front of the street address, if one has obtained

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permission from the local Post Office to do so without "embarrassing" their postmen.

4.—Or, one can use identifying letters in front of the name of one's firm, as for instance, "D. M. Smith & Co.", "D. E. Smith & Co.", etc. This has the disadvantage of altering the firm name. And although it looks like a method of getting people to key their answers 100 per cent., yet in actual practice it produces as many unkeyed returns as the method I recommend of adding department and initials in front of the address.

If a reply postcard (or envelope, or coupon) be an essential part of a mailing shot or press advertisement, then obviously it is easy to key that piece of printed matter with a Dept. or a number.

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A day-by-day sheet used by an experienced mail-order firm is ruled as follows :—

A space for the name of the paper.

A space for the cost of insertion.

A space for the total number of replies expected, based on a "target" of cost-per-inquiry (against which the actual number of replies can be compared).

Six columns for the six days of the week, on which each reply is indicated by a pencil tick.

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A column for total of replies over the six days.

A final column for the summing up of results from the insertion as good, bad, or so-so.

The above is the first step in recording results. At the end of the week they are totalled up, so as to show the average cost of enquiry over the whole of that week, and also to show the pulling power of the particular medium—these being entered in separate records.

Such records are arranged with running totals to show figures over a month, a quarter, a half-year and a year—for the purpose of knowing how things are going throughout the year, and also of being able to compare them with results from previous years.

In regard to results from particular media, some firms use a visible card index system, where total figures are entered when the advertisement has run its course, and a piece of transparent celluloid, moved into position according to a printed scale, which shows AT A GLANCE what is the final profitable value of that particular advertisement.

There are numerous ways of recording,

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tabulating and analysing results. No one way is applicable to every business. They have to be worked out to suit the individual business.

For instance, cost-per-enquiry and cost-per-order are points which every firm needs ; but, in addition, some businesses require to know also the average-value-of-order, because they find that some advertising media will produce large numbers of orders from a relatively poor section of the public ; whereas other media going to richer people will produce fewer orders, but yet these orders are not only greater in amount but are also more valuable to the firm for future profit.

Whatever system you adopt of recording and analysing results, be sure that they provide you with a full and complete picture of what is happening with each single advertisement.

Such figures may not all be directly useful within the space of a few months, but a year or two later they may prove most valuable, both for comparison with the past and for deciding on media and frequency of insertion in the future.

GRAPHIC RECORDS

It is not easy for most people to visualise the ups-and-downs of results from a succession of weekly totals.

Much more impressive on the understanding and the memory is the same set of figures plotted out on a chart or graph, especially when someone trained in figure work knows how to "smooth out" graphs so as to reveal tendencies on the broad scale.

Used in this way, graphs are a valuable aid in planning future procedure.

MAILING AND P.O. REGULATIONS

CHAPTER XIV

ACTUAL METHODS IN MAILING AND P.O. REGULATIONS

IT is possible to deal in one's own office with small mailings up to a couple of thousand ; but experienced mail-order firms usually prefer to place the whole of their facsimile and mailing work "out" with addressing agencies who are specialists in the carrying out of everything connected with mailing.

They do this for several reasons :—

1.—There is a SEEMING advantage in carrying out the work of addressing envelopes, folding, affixing stamps, and so forth inside the office, but only if one reckons the wage expenses of the juniors who carry out that work, and ignores the unseen expenses. On top of the wages, one should really reckon also the rental of the space they occupy,

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the lighting and heating, the wear and tear of typewriters and ribbons, and especially the cost of supervising or checking their work.

If these are properly costed and totalled, it will be found that there is only a SMALL monetary advantage in doing the work with inside staff, instead of placing it "outside."

2.—Such small monetary advantage is far more than counterbalanced by the expertness of the addressing agency, its speed through specialising in such work, and its ability to call on quantities of people—either permanent staff or casual staff—to get through with a large mailing in a very short time.

In an ordinary office the job of getting out 50,000 circulars would take weeks, or even run into months—whereas the addressing agency could get it through in a few days. And if an offer is in any way seasonal or immediate, or is limited by date, this point of speed becomes of vital importance.

3.—If addressing is to be done by hand, the addressing agency calls on a floating population of "casuals," who offer their services day-by-day to one addressing agency or other, finding work where the need for

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their services is most urgent. But the ordinary business firm is not in touch with such addressers, and even if it were, it would find that the handling and supervision of these "casuals" is an art in itself.

4.—The addressing agency also has arrangements with some large local Post Office to send vans for the collection of its matter to be mailed, and various friendly arrangements with the Post Office authorities whereby the clearing of masses of circulars is expedited.

5.—If a mailing shot calls for a facsimile letter to be matched-in very neatly and correctly with the body of the letter, then this is decidedly an expert job. Not many private firms manage to get the perfect match-in, whereas the expert facsimile letter agency can do it, and can GO ON DOING IT, for tens of thousands of letters, so that every one of them will be a neat and perfect match.

6.—Mailing lists have to be compiled from somewhere. Usually the names are taken out of directories. If, for instance, one were addressing to names on the telephone list in various parts of the country, one would

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have to use a number of provincial telephone directories.

All these reference books cost money. Some of them are quite expensive. So, if the business firm wants to do its own addressing, it has to buy these books; but if it entrusts the work to an addressing agency, they keep such directories as part of their stock-in-trade, and they expect to provide names from any kind of directory as a matter of business routine.

THE SIGNING OF FORM LETTERS

It becomes a very wearisome job for any executive to sign personally hundreds of letters. If the quantity runs into thousands, it is not only extremely irksome, but also it eats up too far into his valuable time.

So it is not a practical proposition to sign form letters personally, when a quantity exceeds a couple of hundred. The right course is to make a few specimens of one's signature in Indian ink (not ordinary blue-black ink, because this is bad for blockmaking

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purposes) ; to choose the one which best conveys one's personality ; and to hand it to a facsimile letter agency for the production of a specially curved block which fits on to a rotary duplicating machine.

The signature is then facsimiled at the foot of the letter at the same operation as the duplicating, and costs only 2s. 6*d.* per 1,000. The effect on the mind of the recipient of the form letter is, in my opinion, very nearly the same as a personal signature. I would only use a personal signature in a small quantity of letters, which were REALLY PERSONAL to the man addressed and of very special business importance.

A point to be noted before having a block made of one's signature is to size it up with a ruler and try whether it fits in neatly and unblatantly with the facsimile letter. It may be found to look either too large (which is usually the case) or too small. In such a case, one gives a direction to the blockmaker as to the width one would like to see it reproduced ; and this width can be, at will, either smaller or larger than the written signature.

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FOLDING AND MAILING

Where there are several enclosures in a mailing shot—such as a form letter, a folder and a reply card, one needs to consider carefully which is the best way to fold these up, attach them together, and insert them in the envelope.

That must depend on what it is in the mailing shot one desires first to catch the eye of the man who is to read it.

It will not be the reply card ; that is the last thing you would want him to see. It may not be the printed folder ; more probably one would want him to read the covering letter first.

So the right way would be to pin or clip the folder and reply card behind the letter, to fold the letter around the other two, with the typewriting outside ; and to insert them in the envelope in such a way that when the recipient hurriedly takes the whole out of the envelope, the very first thing on which his eye rests is his own name and address and the opening headline or paragraph of the letter—which presumably has been worded so as to get his interest at the very first glance.

MAILING AND P.O. REGULATIONS

These points help in getting one's message read in the right order, and every experienced mail-order firm makes a routine of being particular about the exact method of folding and enclosing.

Having decided on a model method of folding and enclosing, one needs to be sure that the juniors who are carrying out this work in quantity will keep on doing the same thing rightly. What is quite likely to happen is that they will go on doing it rightly for some time, and then one of them will fold or enclose away from the method decided upon by the executive, and the error will spread by infection to all the rest of them.

So even such a mechanical piece of work as folding and enclosing needs to be supervised. In the well-organised addressing agencies they keep an eye on such points all the time.

THE ACTUAL POSTING

Anything in imitation of typewriting—whether it be a sales letter, or whether the imitation typewriting be part of a folder or booklet—must be “declared” at a local Post

MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

Office in order to enjoy the cheap printed-matter rate.

One can obtain from any Post Office coloured slips on which one signs a declaration to the above effect, and also the number of packets to be posted.

These packets must then be bundled up in quantities of not less than 20, and handed in over a Post Office counter with the declaration slip attached to each separate bundle. Even the method of bundling requires some care, because if thin string is used it will cut into some of the envelopes and their contents, and make them unsightly. The best thing to use for this purpose is quite thick string, tied lightly.

There is a "latest time" for posting at printed-matter rate, which is different from the time of posting at letter-rate. Such times should be ascertained from one's local Post Office—they vary in different parts of the country—otherwise the whole of one's circular matter may be held up for 24 hours before being handled by the Post Office sorters and sent on its way to its destination.

MAILING AND P.O. REGULATIONS

An economy can be made with large mailings by having a quantity of envelopes stamped up with embossed stamps by Somerset House. There are both advantages and disadvantages in this; and the point should be discussed with one's addressing agency in regard to any particular mailing shot.

From the point of view of the recipient, there is no disadvantage at all in using an embossed stamp instead of an adhesive stamp. If the effect on his mind is anything at all, it is probably in favour of the embossed stamp.

In regard to "metered" mail—where a printed impression is put on the envelope instead of an adhesive stamp—there has been considerable prejudice against this by advertisers in the past. But I believe this prejudice is vanishing, because of the very wide usage of such postage impressions by the large drapery stores, sending out their circular matter by the half-million or the million, which is making the public accustomed to receiving circular matter in that form.

This, again, is a point about mailing which should be discussed with one's addressing agency.

MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

POST OFFICE REGULATIONS

Every mail-order advertiser should have a copy of the Post Office Guide for the current year, containing all the latest regulations as to mailing.

New points arise from year to year, and must be carefully attended to by the advertiser—failing which he is likely to have a whole mailing held up, surcharged or rejected altogether by the Post Office.

I am summarising here a few points current at time of writing, which are of special interest to mail-order advertisers :—

Charges for Printed Matter (including duplicated matter).

$\frac{1}{2}d.$ for 2 oz. and an extra $\frac{1}{2}d.$ for every additional 2 oz. or fraction thereof.

Posting Time.

Printed matter is not handled after a certain hour in the afternoon. The time varies for different towns. In London it is usually 4.30 p.m.

But it will be handled, on the day of posting, by adding a Late Fee Stamp of an extra $\frac{1}{2}d.$

MAILING AND P.O. REGULATIONS

Weight.

Maximum—2 lbs. (Charge, 8*d.*).

Size.

Maximum—2 ft. long, 1 ft. wide, 1 ft. deep.

Minimum—4" x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

Method of Closing.

Printed matter must be open to P.O. inspection, without tearing or cutting. Clip, or string-and-button fasteners are permitted.

Special Methods of Stamping.

Franked or metered mail is accepted under certain conditions. Somerset House will also emboss stamps in quantities on envelopes supplied to them. Consult your local P.O. if you contemplate using any of these methods.

Samples.

Can only be sent by Inland Post at letter-rate or parcel post rate. But they can be sent abroad at a special low sample post rate.

MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

Included under the heading of samples are: paper, blotting paper, envelopes, labels, etc. Also scented paper mailed by a perfumery firm.

“Embarrassing” Postal Matter.

The P.O. may refuse to handle certain “freak” envelopes or packets on the ground that they make sorting difficult for the P.O. staff. It is therefore advisable to show a “dummy” of your mailing to the local P.O. before it is printed; otherwise the whole shot may be turned down and wasted.

Here are some of the “embarrassing” points:—

- 1.—Printing beyond the left-half of the envelope, wrapper or front of packet; or close to the postage stamp or the name and address.
- 2.—An imitation postage stamp.
- 3.—Any kind of frame around a postage stamp.
- 4.—Name and address written across the breadth instead of the length.
- 5.—“Fancy shapes” which are not square or oblong.

MAILING AND P.O. REGULATIONS

- 6.—An envelope or packet of red or other colour which may cause eye-strain to the sorters.
- 7.—A wholly transparent envelope.
- 8.—A “ window envelope ” that is not made to standard regulations.
- 9.—A “ window envelope ” showing anything besides name and address.
- 10.—An opening to an envelope or packet wider than $4\frac{1}{2}$ ". Envelopes wider than this must have a flap or other fastening contraption which will prevent other letters getting caught in the opening. At the same time, they must, of course, be easy to open and inspect.

POINTS ABOUT THE POSTAL C.O.D. SERVICE

The P.O. undertake to collect from the addressee and remit to the sender the value of letters or parcels sent by post and of parcels sent by rail.

Value.

MAXIMUM £40.

Destination.

LETTERS AND PARCELS BY POST.—Whole of British Isles, except Irish Free State.

MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

PARCELS BY RAIL.—British Isles, except any part of Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Orkneys, Shetlands and Hebrides.

Registration.

Compulsory for all LETTERS sent C.O.D.

Charges.

LETTERS AND PARCELS BY POST.—The ordinary postage registration fees PLUS: For collecting 10s., 4d.; £1, 6d.; £2, 8d.; £5, 10d.; and 2d. for each additional £5 or fraction of £5.

PARCELS BY RAIL.—The above, plus 3d. per parcel for the Railway Co. and the Railway freight charge.

Method of Dispatch.

LETTERS AND PARCELS BY POST.—At any Money Order P.O. Write on cover name and address of sender and of addressee; and amount to be collected. Do not use a tie-on label. Affix on letter or parcel stamps for the value of the postage and registration fee (for letters). Fill up special form, and affix stamps for value of C.O.D. fee on it.

MAILING AND P.O. REGULATIONS

PARCELS BY RAIL.—Obtain from a P.O. a combined address-label and receipt-form. Affix the former to the parcel and hand to Railway Co. Post the receipt form to addressee as a C.O.D. Registered Letter.

Delivery.

LETTERS AND PARCELS BY POST.—If goods are valued at less than £10, the postman collects the money and delivers the packet. If over £10, the addressee is notified of arrival at his local P.O. and he must call for them.

PARCELS BY RAIL.—Postman collects the money from the addressee, and gives him the letter containing the receipt—which authorises him to obtain the parcels from his local railway station.

MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

CHAPTER XV

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF CUSTOMERS

THE repeat order is the bedrock of any business.

The repeat order comes from a satisfied customer.

A satisfied customer is the real basis of goodwill, which has been defined by a great Judge as: "*The disposition of the customer to return to the place where he has been well served.*"

In order to keep mail-order customers well satisfied, one should strive to do something for them over and beyond supplying a good article at a moderate price. I agree that this is first and foremost in the building of a sound business; but it is by no means the whole story in mail-order, where the customer never sees the shop and never comes into personal contact with the proprietor or staff.

MORE OUT OF CUSTOMERS

Every mail-order house, however excellent its goods, however cheap its prices, finds that customers drop away each year; and if a special effort be made to find out whether they have any complaint, or whether there is something in their minds against the firm, it usually develops that there is no special reason in their mind; they have just been attracted by some other firm's competitive goods, or have changed their mind or taste, for reasons of the flimsiest kind.

In order to retain such customers firmly, the right thing to do is to try and *put them under a sense of obligation*.

Some successful mail-order firms exercise a great deal of thought in this direction. They search around to find some reasonable excuse for doing the customer a favour. With one such firm, amongst its string of form letters to regular customers sent at intervals throughout the year, is one which invites him, when he is in London, to come into their Showrooms and use a specially reserved writing place for his own purposes; to write his business letters there; to meet a friend there; or to use it as a temporary business address while in London. Not many customers actually

MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

use these conveniences, but the thought is a nice one, and it makes the customer feel well disposed towards the firm.

In another form letter they ask him if he would like some foreign stamps for his kiddies, or for the children of his friends. This is a very slight favour, but it bulks quite large with men who have stamp collectors amongst their little ones.

Another form of procedure is to send a house magazine to customers a few times in the course of the year—such magazine being conceived with the idea of giving general entertainment and information as well as directly advertising the firm's goods.

Another plan, which is often used, is to distribute at Xmas time or at the New Year, some little novelty which a man can carry in his pocket or have on his office desk, or a woman can use on her writing desk or in her kitchen.

It must look "good enough," while not expensive. It must be really useful. And I also advise that it carry no advertising whatever, not even the name of the firm which

MORE OUT OF CUSTOMERS

presents it. It will be quite sufficient if the firm's name be mentioned by quite inconspicuous initials, because these will sufficiently act as a reminder of the firm's existence to the man or woman who uses the little gift, and will not be blatantly obvious to friends.

Many a man or woman would not carry (say) a pocket-knife or pencil sharpener which had any obvious form of advertisement attached to it.

If one is deliberately trying to do the other man a little favour, or put him under a sense of obligation, then the effect must not be ruined by trying to advertise oneself forcibly at the same time.

NEVER NEGLECT THE REGULAR CUSTOMER !

Never assume that the regular customer will go on and on with his orders to your firm, without effort on your part.

Always assume that he is liable to fall away from the fold unless he is "kept sweet." Spend your brains—and spend some of your advertising appropriation—in letters or other form of reminder to regular customers at

MAIL-ORDER MADE EASY

least three or four times in the year. Conceive them as *pleasant reminders*—so that the customer will feel friendly towards you when he gets your message.

Make it a business rule that the customer does not get from you only a request to buy every time he reads your message. Strive to do something **FOR** him—to give him some little extra service he is not expecting, and which therefore will be doubly welcomed because of its unexpectedness as well as its value to him !

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